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The mediatorial reign of the Son of God
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THE

MEDIATORIAL REIGN

OF THE

SON OF GOD;

OR,

THE ABSOLUTE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS

OF

JESUS CHRIST

TO SAVE ALL MANKIND,

DEMONSTRATED FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

IN WHICH WORK

AN ATTEMPT IS MADE TO RESCUE

THE GOSPEL-CALL FROM FALSE PHILOSOPHY.

BY JAMES GRAY, D. D.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."—PSALM xlviii.

"Spare no arrows."—JOHN KNOX.

"Ανηρ δη ϰτω αν ειη αριϛος, ει βϰλευομενος μεν αρρωδεοι, παν επιλεγομενος πειϛεϛθαι χρημα, εν δε τω εργω θρασυς ειη,"

HERODOTUS.

Baltimore:

PUBLISHED BY CUSHING & JEWETT.

1821.

JOHN D. TOY, PRINTER.

DISTRICT OF MARYLAND, *to wit:*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of May, in the forty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Joseph Cushing and Joseph Jewett, of the said district, have deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

SEAL.

"The Mediatorial Reign of the Son of God; or, the absolute ability and willingness of Jesus Christ to save all mankind, demonstrated from the Scriptures. In which work an attempt is made to rescue the Gospel-call from false philosophy. By James Gray, D. D.

"'Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for eve. and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.'—Psalm xlviii.

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Herodotus."

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Clerk of the District of Maryland.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS work has been so long promised to the public, and its progress so frequently inquired after, by some who were pleased to take an interest in my studies; that it may be proper to give some account, in this place, of the causes, which have retarded its appearance.

It may be mentioned then, that the delay was partly voluntary, partly involuntary. At the commencement of my writing, a severe accident arrested my energies entirely for some time, and for a long period afterwards considerably impaired them. By the time that this impediment was removed, I had learned that my former work, THE FIEND OF THE REFORMATION DETECTED, was exciting some agitation. By some I found it received with great kindness and satisfaction; by others with coldness and disapprobation; while there were some who

seemed to be struck with a certain undefined apprehensiveness of consequences; fearing, it would seem, least I should be led into conclusions injurious to evangelical truth; or, perhaps, that I was going to add one more, to the already too numerous theories, which are troubling the church of God. Under these circumstances, I thought it my duty to suspend my labours, and give place to others to propose their opinions; expecting that one or another might detect some mistakes, into which I may have fallen; and that, in any event, I could not fail to obtain a fuller knowledge of the state of public opinion, and a clearer perception of the exigencies of the argument. I do not regret the delay; for although no defect has been made apparent to me, in the view of the general subject of the imputability of Christ's righteousness to all men, exhibited in my former publication; yet overwhelming evidence has appeared, that there is something radically wrong in our present modes of theological investigation; and that it is high time, not merely to refute the errors which at present exist among us, but to detect the latent channels through which they have entered, and through which others are likely to enter.

During the time of my suspended operations on the present theme; I commenced another work, which I intended to be an introductory volume to the present; under the title of

A review of the reformation churches; being an attempt to ascertain the causes which have retarded, and the means which may accelerate the progress of reformation. In this latter work I had made considerable progress; but not having full command of my time, nor access to many requisite authorities, I was reluctantly constrained to give up that object, at least for the present.

It was fifteen months after the publication of the Fiend of the Reformation, that I commenced the writing of the present. The first draught was finished in nine months; but as it was written in the short intervals of a laborious employment, frequent repetitions of the same arguments, occasional omissions, with some defects in order and arrangement; rendered it necessary to make a fair copy for the press. If the critical reader should think, that there are still too many of the above faults in the production, and more than can be excused by the nature of the work, or the mode of investigation adopted, I will make no defence; but I hope that, as a lover of truth and good learning, he will allow the same excuse of broken and interrupted studies, to extenuate what it cannot justify.

I have very carefully and conscientiously considered, every publication which has come to my hand on the subject (and they have not been few); and I think a sufficient reply to all they

have urged respecting the main doctrine, will be found in the following work: but I have not named the authors, whose sentiments I refute; lest I should give any occasion to those personalities; which are in their effects so hostile to the investigation and discovery of truth.

DEDICATION.

TO STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY.

ACCEPT, young gentlemen, a work written purposely for your use. You are an object of great interest in the christian church. A number of young men of handsome talents, liberal education, correct morals, and hopeful piety; devoting themselves exclusively to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and of the literature necessary to their interpretation, for the express purpose of taking part with the Son of God in the regeneration of the world, presents to the christian public a sight, which awakens the tenderest and most powerful feelings of attachment. not without a mixture of apprehension and fear. The old look up to you, as the men who are to smooth their dying pillow, and stand by them in their approaching conflict with the last enemy, death: the young hail you as their destined instructors, and guides through the

snares and temptations of this troublesome life: the present gospel ministry, especially the aged among them, eye you with close inspection, as the men into whose hands they are shortly to surrender the management, and, so far as human agency reaches, the destinies of the christian church. All join their prayers at the throne of grace, that you may escape the snares of the devil, the seductions of false philosophy, the pride of science, and the vanity of public praise; and that the Lord Jesus, may send you out into his church, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, prepared to teach and exhort, to reprove and rebuke, with all long suffering and authority; and to be, and become, workmen who need not be ashamed of their work, rightly dividing the word of truth.

It seems to me, if I may trust my own impressions, that I also owe you a duty of love; which I accordingly endeavour to discharge, by putting into your hands the present publication. I know that God in his infinite goodness, has furnished you with instructors, far more competent to open to your youthful minds the richness and variety of evangelical truth, than I either am or pretend to be: and if I could have persuaded myself, that the superior services of other men, might exempt me from attempting any service at all, I should have been easily prevailed on, to excuse myself from this labo-

rious undertaking, in circumstances which rendered seclusion and repose, if not absolutely necessary to me, at least extremely desirable. But I knew that this could not be. It is in fact rather a sense of personal duty, and a desire to acquit myself to myself, than any other consideration, which have induced me to trouble you with this production.

When I was at your time of life, gentlemen, and engaged in the same pursuits which now occupy you; with the same hopes and fears, elevations and depressions, and all the endless anxieties, which agitate and convulse your bosoms; it was my lot to get entangled, in certain questions and speculations, which, in my simplicity, I supposed to belong to the system of christian doctrine; and the settlement of which, I imagined to be indispensible to the man who would preach the gospel correctly. I shall not weary your patience, by attempting a detail of the distractions, toils, and perils, into which this unfortunate mistake led me: suffice it to say, that no small portion of my life has been spent, endeavouring the solution of this simple question: what is that gospel which a minister ought to preach from the pulpit? In my investigations, I seemed to myself to discover a broad line of distinction, between the three following subjects; *Christianity—the Philosophy of Christianity—and the Metaphysics of Christianity.* You will

understand these terms and their distinctions, when you have read through the present publication. My deliberate judgment is, that it is the confounding of these three subjects, which more than any thing else, has occasioned the doctrinal wars in the reformed churches, and which is at present embroiling the churches in America.

With these views of things, I cannot think myself officious or obtrusive, if at the age of fifty, I assume a privilege, which others think themselves entitled to enjoy at twenty-five, namely, that of submitting my thoughts to the judgment of the christian public. I am the more strongly impelled to this publication, by considering that many of the subjects, which at present rage so furiously on the public field, are the same which once tortured myself so inexpressibly in private. I would wish it to be distinctly understood, that although I set a high value upon many of the doctrines, which will be found in the following pages, sincerely believing them to be the fundamental principles of the gospel; yet in my judgment, the principal merit in the work, (if indeed it shall be allowed to possess any merit) consists in drawing the above mentioned lines of distinction. That these distinctions exist in the nature of things, I have no manner of doubt; and for the present, would willingly flatter myself, that I have accurately pointed them out in many decisive instances. It is also my opinion, that when

young theologians shall, through practice, find themselves capable of referring, at a glance, to its proper class, any question which may occur to them; they will find little difficulty in determining its value, its mode of investigation, and its ultimate use. In all our systems of theology, the three distinct classes of subjects, which have been specified, are in one degree or other, jumbled together and confounded, under the general idea of christian doctrine: and it is my opinion, that if our doctrinal errors were entirely banished, our present mode of investigation, would in less than seven years, bring them all back again, perhaps re-inforced by new monsters, still more frightful than the old.

Having thus laid before you the unvarnished reasons, which induced me to write this book, and dedicate it to you, and praying that you may be enamoured of the Scriptures, anointed with the spirit of wisdom, and made burning and shining lights in the church of God—I subscribe myself,

Gentlemen,

Your affectionate friend,

And humble servant,

JAMES GRAY.

Baltimore, May 1, 1821.

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THE

MEDIATORIAL REIGN

OF THE

SON OF GOD.

INTRODUCTION.

IN argument, as in war, there are certain positions so strong by nature, or so fortified by art, that they must be occupied at every risk, and maintained to desperation. It is well known, that in every species of investigation, there are certain points where truth shines in its own essential splendor, and carries intuitive conviction to the human understanding. The truths so perceived form the elements of all our just and correct reasonings. These truths cannot be proved by argument, for they are known previous to every exercise of the reasoning faculty; they cannot be illustrated, because nothing is more clear than themselves; and they cannot be denied, without involving us in utter skepticism and darkness.

Since christianity is a revelation from God, the evidence which recommends its propositions to our belief, is the simple declaration of the God of truth: the power of the human mind, by which we assent to these propositions, is called faith; it is that power, or faculty, of

the rational mind, by which we are necessitated to believe credible testimony. Nothing can be more evident, than that the God of truth cannot lie; and from this it follows, by necessary consequence, that all things uttered by God are equally true, and equally entitled to implicit credence. But it by no means follows, that all scriptural truths are revealed with equal clearness; or that they are equally important to mankind. There is a great difference among them, in both these respects. Some of the truths of christianity are of vital importance; so that the denial of one of these, would unhinge and destroy the whole system, and render salvation impossible: some are of an inferior, yet still of considerable moment; and some are of very subordinate moment. In respect to the degree of evidence, also, there is a great difference among them. Some truths are revealed with such clearness and distinctness; such abundance, and almost superabundance, of light and evidence, that they overwhelm the human understanding with conviction; leaving not one remaining shadow of doubt to cloud our assurance, that these are indeed the very truths of God. There are other truths, which we believe with doubting and hesitation; and some which most men, perhaps, discern not at all.

Such is the difference between the *evidence* and *importance* of various revealed truths. But it will be found, I believe, that in all instances an exact proportion is preserved, between the importance of a truth, and the degree of its evidence. I am led to adopt this opinion, not merely by arguing from the divine perfections, that such apportioning of evidence to the practical value of the truth revealed, is, in itself, a thing most befitting; but also by comparing together those propositions of christian truth, which I seem to myself

to understand. From such comparison, I learn, that whatever is of vital importance to me, I can find in the scriptures, so clearly revealed, and so precisely stated, that I find it impossible to entertain a doubt upon the subject. And I do suppose, that all they who have sought, and obtained satisfaction for themselves in the holy scriptures, with relation to those principles of their faith, which now form the basis of their hope, and the light and solace of their pilgrimage, will be able to acknowledge a similar experience. A distinguished man of the last century has expressed himself to the following purport.* "I have given up many things which I once believed; among the things which I still continue to believe, there are some of which I entertain doubts; at least I set a smaller value upon them, than I once did; but the things which I consider to constitute the essence of christianity, and which are the ground of my hope, I believe more firmly than at an earlier period; these I will never doubt, nor surrender to any one."

Those who undertake to ascertain what is the doctrinal system of christianity, must pursue the very same course of investigation, which an individual inquirer takes to obtain satisfaction respecting his own salvation. The doctrinal inquirers must search the scriptures, in order to ascertain what are those points of doctrine, which are placed in the clearest light; which are presented in every attitude; which are incapable of being mistaken, by an industrious and honest inquirer after truth: and such doctrines when found, and they will not be long a finding, must be laid down as immutable foundations in the system of christianity. Doctrines of minor importance, and less de-

* I quote from memory—John Newton I think was the man.

cisive evidence, will find their proper places and connections; and room will be left for honest opinions, and modest conjectures. The justness of these remarks will not, I flatter myself, be disputed.

In this view of the subject, a most important question arises. Is there, in the christian system, any one definite point, upon which divine light concentrates all the converging rays of evidence? Is there a point where the doctrine of salvation was first seen, by every man who has seen it; and where it will be first seen by every man who shall hereafter see it? Is there a point where revealed truth shines with irresistible powers of conviction, and where it shines alike to all; where we can see it, and know it, and be sure of it, by means of that plain common sense which God has bestowed upon all rational men; and where we can be sure of it, without any of those refinements of speculation, which are attainable only by the learned and studious? Is there, in the christian field, a grand central citadel, from which every thing which moves in that field, whether hostile or friendly, is visible; a position, which supported, all is supported; and which lost, the whole is lost? Is there a post in the christian field, from which all succors must be sent to the warring columns of the army; and behind which every broken column must retreat, rally and reform?

There is such a central point, post, and citadel, in the christian field! And, by the grace of God, we shall attempt to sketch its plan from the graduated scale of inspiration. We will "walk about Zion, and go round about her." We will "tell the towers thereof." We will "mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces." We will "tell the generation following:" and we will charge them to tell the succeeding genera-

tion. "For this God is our God for ever and ever;" and this is his saving truth unto all generations. Lord let thy good spirit rest upon us! Amen.

The christian church has a right to expect, that I have counted the cost of the dangerous enterprize in which I am engaging. She has so often suffered fearful calamities, from the rashness and incompetency of her sons, who have brought her into troubles out of which they were unable to extricate her, that she does well to view with jealous inspection, every man, be he who he may, who agitates questions respecting the fundamental doctrines of her faith. I do not desire to lull that jealousy, nor to evade that inspection! Placing myself under the eye of omniscience, not only for the sincerity of my convictions on every point which I advance; but also for the fact that my convictions have been the result of reasonable inquiry in all instances; and in the more essential instances, the result of long, and painful, and repeated inquiries; I at the same time place myself under the eye of the christian church, begging her to watch all my movements, to cheer me when I am right, to check and instruct me if I should go wrong; and above all to pray earnestly that the truth and glory of Jesus may soon triumph over error, and darkness, and false philosophy.

I do not come forward to propose discoveries in christian theology: I have not a discovery in christian theology to propose; not one! I knew the gospel as well when I was fifteen, as I do now at fifty years of age. I do not know at this day, one principle of the christian faith which I did not know then.

My whole life has been spent in the ardent and incessant pursuit of truth, particularly moral truth, and especially the truth contained in the Holy Scriptures, the

revelation of heavenly mysteries by Jesus Christ. And yet, in relation to the doctrines of the christian faith, the only discovery I ever have made, is this: I have discovered in confessions, and creeds, and systems, and theories, and sermons, things which I never could find in the Bible, and which I am sure are not to be found in it. At present I come forward, in order to tell to the Church of God a few things which I HAVE found in the Bible; and if any man should discover any thing in his creed, contrary to what I shall demonstrate to be in the Bible, I take it for granted that such a man will thank me for having assisted him to rectify a mistake; but should he refuse me his gratitude, I know too much of the world, ever to expect his pardon. It is the truth taught expressly, explicitly, and intentionally in the Scripture, which I intend to state and to maintain; and whatever proposition I cannot show to be the intentional meaning of some passage of Scripture, I shall leave every man to accept, or reject, as he shall think proper. And as the Scriptures are the only rule of my faith and opinions in religious matters, I shall quote them liberally and largely, that the faith of my readers may not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the wisdom of God. Professing to discuss important truth, for the conviction of rational men, I shall be studious of the utmost degree of perspicuity. I shall also most conscientiously cultivate the temper and spirit becoming an advocate of divine truth: a spirit of meekness and candour; of justice and liberality, and ardent charity; zealous only for the truth, hostile only to error; delighting to praise every thing that is praiseworthy; and in censuring that which ought to be blamed, always reverencing that boundary line which separates the mistakes of men from their personal integrity and

character. I shall take all the care in my power, that if I should not be so happy as to enlarge the knowledge of my readers, I may at least escape the misfortune of diminishing the stock of their virtues. At the same time, I cannot contract any obligation for the suppression of my feelings, as I go on with my discussion: by me, this subject never can be touched, without resuscitating feelings which are destined, not to be governed, but to govern. I will not vainly attempt what neither can, nor ought to be accomplished; neither will I consent to forego the honourable use of any fair weapon which I can draw in this cause.

The truths which are to enter into this discussion are of no trivial character; but such as involve the very marrow and essence of the christian religion, the character of gospel ministrations, the sinner's hope and the saint's consolation. What my hand findeth to do, I shall do with all my might; the reader, it is hoped, will feel that his duty is not less imperative than mine; the one writes, the other reads, under eternal responsibilities; neither must shrink from the intellectual toil which this subject undoubtedly will require. Despair be far from our thoughts; success will be an ample reward to us both. Let us proceed.

CHAPTER I.

THE CENTRAL POINT AND FIRST PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIANITY, IS THE INDISCRIMINATE OFFER OF SALVATION TO ALL MANKIND.

By the central point and first principle of christianity, I understand that point where the rays of gospel truth first fall upon the eyes of man; that point where he gets his first views of pardon, peace, and acceptance with God. This point, whatever it is, must be MAN'S central point; MAN'S first principle of christianity. And I assert that the point and principle in question is this—THE MEDIATORIAL SON OF GOD OFFERING SALVATION TO SINNERS, AND COMMANDING THEM TO ACCEPT IT. Till the sinner has heard Jesus offering him salvation, he has heard nothing of the gospel; till he hears the offer enforced by the awful authority of the command to accept it, he cannot feel that the whole of his moral duty is summed up in this one precept, "Believe and thou shalt be saved." The offer is all grace, the command is all authority; both combined form a full display of the gracious reign of Jesus, the mediatorial sovereign of our world. The offer of salvation gives the sinner a right to accept it, the command renders acceptance his duty: to reject the offer is a folly, which keeps him out of the possession of eternal happiness; to disobey the command is an act of

rebellion, which exposes him to everlasting wrath. Life and death, the blessing and the curse, are set before him; if he accepts the good, he has acted prudently, and acquitted himself as a dutiful subject of Jesus Christ, and shall obtain glory, honour, and immortality; but if he shall harden his heart in unbelief, disobey the command of his sovereign, and reject life; then this shall be his condemnation, "that light had come into the world, but he loved darkness rather than light." Such is the gospel. Never was there seen, or conceived, such a combination and unity of grace and authority, as in the mediatorial reign of the son of God. It is grace, rich and sovereign grace, calling in the aid of infinite authority to enforce happiness on man; it is infinite authority, in its most tremendous energy, supporting the cause and success of grace.

This I say is the first principle of gospel truth known to man! Till I know this, I know nothing. You tell me that a being of infinite wisdom, power and holiness, created this world and placed me in it. You tell me that he gave me a law, promising to reward my obedidience with eternal life, and threatening to punish my disobedience with eternal death. You tell me also, that the truth, justice and holiness of this infinite being, bind him equally to execute the punishment threatened in his law upon the guilty, and to confer upon the obedient the promised reward. But O dreadful sequel! to my own perfect conviction, confusion and terror, you prove that I am a rebel against that infinite being; that I am a violator of his holy law; that his justice pronounces me guilty of sin and worthy of death. My conscience testifies to me that all this is true. But surely you do not call this the gospel, surely this is not

the good news! If there be any good news, it is yet to come. To tell me that my judge is omniscient to search out all my sins and aberrations; that his infinite justice cannot possibly pass by, excuse, or extenuate any one of them; and that his omnipotence arms him with the means of inflicting the merited punishment; this surely is no good news to me. You have arrayed all the infinite perfections of an infinite God against a guilty worm. Is there no refuge for me!

It is then that I hear the son of God saying to me—"come unto me and I will give you rest!—Believe and thou shalt be saved!" This is good news. And it is the only news to me, which merits the name of good. This is the very gospel. I have eternal salvation freely offered to me; if I come to Jesus and by faith place myself under his authority, God pardons all my sins, and I begin a new life of holiness and new obedience leading to immortality; none shall ever pluck me out of his hand, but he will raise me up at the last day and fill me with all the fulness of God. But if I should neglect or despise the offer, and disobey the command which bade me be happy, then this will be Jehovah's vindication of his own moral government at the last day, that I voluntarily and with my eyes open chose death rather than life.

As it was in the general offer of salvation by Jesus, that the believer first saw the light of salvation, so it is to that general offer that he must always retreat for refuge, in all the stormy troubles which harrass and vex his pilgrimage. When the christian's corruptions are permitted to rage and lay him low; when the consolations of the divine spirit are abated, or withdrawn; when Satan, like an angel of light to deceive, or a roaring lion to devour, is let loose upon him, with the old

extensive commission, "behold he is in thy hand but thou shalt not touch his life:" when in consequence of all this, the saint can no longer call himself a son or a servant of God; when darkness covers all the past, and dismal boding hides the future; he recollects that Jesus even now offers him a free salvation, and he hastens to him for that salvation as if he had never applied before; and having reached the fountain of living waters, he drinks abundantly and his spirit returns into him once more. Thus is the free offer of salvation to sinners, the christian man's grand and central point through life; thither he must resort for strength and consolation all his days.

Nor is this subject of less importance to the man who engages in deep speculations on the theory of revealed truth. The free offer of salvation to sinners by Jesus Christ is HIS first principle also, and it ever must remain his central point, where the pillar of the cloud rests by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to which therefore he must return whenever he gets entangled in the thickets, or swamped in the quagmires, of speculation. How easy a thing does man find it, to lose himself in darkness and in doubts! One man mounts up into the heavens, unrolls the volume of God's eternal purposes, and vainly thinking that he comprehends his first principles, and as vainly confiding in the accuracy of his logical processes, he argues himself down to human affairs upon earth; and then he brings out his *quæ erant demonstranda*, such conclusions as these; that there are sinners, and no small number of them, whom Jesus Christ is neither able nor willing to save; that therefore he cannot, and of consequence does not, offer salvation to them; and that it cannot then be their duty to believe! And thus are conclusions drawn

directly contradictory to the first principle of gospel truth, the free offer of salvation by Christ to sinners in general—to sinners as such. Another speculator, more prudent in his own eyes, begins with sinful man as he finds him. And having established a doctrine for himself, respecting human ABILITY and INABILITY to believe the gospel; he brings out the conclusions, that sinners, as such, cannot in moral justice be commanded to believe in Jesus for salvation; and that therefore they are not so commanded to believe. Thus again is the first principle of gospel truth, the free offer of salvation by Jesus Christ, to all sinners who hear his gospel, set aside. But as the skilful astronomer, and the experienced seaman, begin every day's reckoning, by taking the altitude of the meridian sun; and as by these altitudes daily taken, they correct the errors to which their science and their art, in common with every thing human, are liable; so the wise students of gospel truth, will always observe, and always regulate themselves by the meridian altitude of the sun of righteousness—Jesus the son of God shining in the rays of salvation freely offered to all sinful men in the preaching of his gospel.

Perhaps to many of my readers, the point which I have mentioned may appear so very much of a first principle, and so very plainly taught in every page of inspiration, that it ought to be assumed as a truth indisputable; and that to produce formal evidence is nothing else than a needless waste of time. As to the first of these opinions, namely the clear and indisputable evidence of the principle in question, I am as fully satisfied, as any man possibly can be; and I would therefore undoubtedly abstain from the formal production of evidence, were it not for the following causes.

1. That in different parts of the reformed church, and at different times down to the present day, the truth of the principle so clear to me, and to many others, has been absolutely denied; and the principle itself represented as a gross corruption of the gospel; while the contrary principle, namely that salvation is not offered to sinners, as such, by Jesus Christ; and that sinners are not bound in duty to believe in Jesus for salvation, has been maintained, and with the most fervent zeal and indefatigable industry propagated, as the pure essential gospel of our Lord and Saviour. 2. That the views of the gospel last mentioned, prevail in this country, to a large extent, at the present time. My own ears have heard the sentiments pronounced with decision and zeal from that chair where verity is seated to utter infallible dictates. And I understand that a great many learned and pious men in the land, are putting forth all their might to diffuse these sentiments universally, as the only pure gospel of Jesus Christ. 3. In some parts of the church, to which we have been in the habit of looking for the effectual defence of pure evangelical doctrine, I perceive certain THEORIES, which, if their first principles be logically argued out to their legitimate and unavoidable conclusions, will issue in this; that the preacher of the gospel cannot offer salvation to any sinner, nor command any sinner to believe in Jesus for salvation. Some abettors of the theories in question, do indeed maintain the universality of the gospel call, and preach accordingly; who therefore are not to be charged with opposition to that call; though it may be proved, perhaps, that their faith has held the inspired truth in opposition to correct logic. Others there are, who, when they come to speak about the universality of the gospel call, use explanations, and qualifications,

till their language becomes to me extremely ambiguous, and I cannot be absolutely certain what they mean.

No man liveth for himself, but for his God, and for his Saviour, and for society. Moreover to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, the omission is sin. I said, therefore, that I also will show my opinion. I hope then that those who differ from me on the present subject, will out of regard to general truth examine what I shall utter. And I hope that those who already agree with me, will have patience, while I try what can be said from the Scriptures in favour of our common, and to us all-important principle—The right and duty of all men to accept that salvation which Jesus Christ offers equally, freely, and in the same manner to all who hear his gospel; and which he equally commands each and every man of them, to accept individually for himself, with a promise that he who believes shall be saved, and a threatening that he who believeth not shall be damned, BECAUSE he has not believed in the only begotten son of God.

Since then this point must be maintained, I shall throw myself into one of those divine fortresses which surround me, determined on regular and obstinate battle. I have my choice of many such fortresses, and shall therefore take the first which offers; which is, I believe, as strong as any; and with the direction of whose batteries I am not entirely unacquainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTERIAL COMMISSON GIVEN BY JESUS CHRIST TO HIS APOSTLES, AND THROUGH THEM TO ALL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, HAS AN EQUAL RESPECT TO ALL MANKIND.

MINISTERIAL COMMISSION. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo! I am with you always unto the end of the world." Mat. xxviii. 18—20.

My heart seems to fail me, when I attempt to illustrate the above document. There is not another in the Bible of greater importance; and there is not within the whole compass of literary communication, a document more perspicuously worded. It presents no intricacies to be unravelled, no obscurities to be illuminated. Our Lord is commissioning his ministers to proclaim his grace and salvation to mankind; and the commission is, as it ought to be, as explicit and obvious as human language admits; and furnishes no ground for misapprehension or mistake. But what divine wisdom made bright as the light, man's wisdom has rendered dark enough. Let us take the subject

to pieces, therefore, that we may examine each part of it separately; and then let us put them together again, that we may form a judgment of the whole.

1. This commission was issued after our Lord had finished his atonement. After he had accomplished the work which the Father had given him to do, which was "To finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness."* After he had "his own self borne our sins in his own body on the tree."† After he had "spoiled principalities and powers," triumphing over them on his cross:‡ After he had by his death destroyed "him that had the power of death, that is the devil," and had "made reconciliation for the sins of the people:"§ After he "had been delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."‖

2. As Jesus asserts that all power in heaven and in earth was given to him by his father, so it was given him as his mediatorial reward for having satisfied for human transgression, and as a mediatorial means of administering his grace; "Being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high."¶ And again, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he through the grace of God should taste death for every man; crowned with glory and honour."** Thus also he is represented as an high priest entering into the high and holy heavens with blood;††

* Dan. ix. 24. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. ‡ Col. ii. 15. § Heb. ii. 14, 17. ‖ Rom. iv. 25. ¶ Heb. i. 3. ** Heb. ii. 9. †† Heb. iv.

as standing at the right hand of God, the place of his exaltation, to make everlasting intercession. These are the terms in which he himself states the connection between his earthly conflict and his heavenly exaltation: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."* And to quote no more, we are told that the son of God "being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."†

I move no curious questions, but content myself with plain and undeniable moral facts. It is then the plain revealed doctrine of the Scriptures, that in consequence of the satisfaction which he rendered to the divine law, the son of God is inaugurated by his father to the moral lieutenancy, the mediatorial sovereignty, of heaven and earth. God the Father, therefore, does not immediately sway the sceptre of heaven and earth; but he sways the sceptre of both, composing one grand moral empire, by the hands of his mediatorial son. This doctrine our Lord teaches us most explicitly, on all fit occasions: "The father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son."‡ It would, however, be a very false conclusion, to infer from this fact, that men are not subject to the Father at all; Paul argues differently; and infers that men are sub-

* Rev. iii. 21. † Phil. ii. 8—11. ‡ John v. 22.

ject to God the Father, because they are subject to Jesus, to whom the Father has committed the administration of his government; his expression is—"being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,"* that is under the law to God, because under the law of Christ.

In respect to this mediatorial reign of Jesus, we may remark, that according to the express doctrine of Scripture, the system of administration is different, in what we may call the different PROVINCES of the empire; a few words on which subject are necessary, in order to clear our main question from all extraneous matter.

That the holy angels are subject to Jesus in his mediatorial character, is asserted by our Lord in the preamble to the ministerial commission which lies before us. Paul also speaks of God thus, "when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."† And accordingly they worshipped him, and ministered unto him, while he lived among men; they watched at his tomb till his resurrection; and on the day of his ascension, their glorious hosts, in bright array, attended the triumphant entry of their Lord into glory. And now they co-operate with him in the administration of his government. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."‡ Yet Jesus Christ did not redeem the holy angels; "for verily he took not on him the nature of angels."§ It is not the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ, but their own righteousness and merit, which secure the angels in the enjoyment of celestial blessedness. If we might modestly ven-

* 1 Cor. ix. 21. † Heb. i. 6. ‡ Heb. i. 14. § Heb. ii. 16.

ture an opinion on so sublime a subject, we would say, that to co-operate with the son of God in rectifying the disorders which sin has introduced into Jehovah's government, and in extending grace and mercy to sinful men, is the most glorious and happy employment which we can conceive; and we are sure that the enterprise which the son of God has thought worthy of him, will be thought infinitely honourable by all the holy angels. Of this fact we are certain, that such is the angelic employment; and as their employment must constitute their felicity, we may reasonably conclude, that their ministering to those who shall be the heirs of glory constitutes, at least in part, the heaven of the holy angels, the reward of their probationary integrity. These opinions receive apparent support, from what the apostle Peter says of the employment of the angels. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when he testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, WHICH THINGS THE ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO."*

The contemplation of Jehovah's glories, which shine in all his works, but which shine with inimitable lustre in his moral administrations, constitutes the supreme felicity of pure moral intelligences, whose eyes are not more adapted to the perception of such scenes,

* 1 Peter i. 10—12.

than their hearts to thrill, and exult, and swell; and to participate in the glory which they contemplate. But when in the redemption of man, the moral perfections of Jehovah were to be displayed in a new character; when mercy, an attribute before that time probably conceivable only by the infinite mind, was to ray out its new and peculiar splendors, and to spread a most brilliant, but a softened light, over the awful majesty of Deity; it seems to have been a dispensation of great propriety to place the angelic sons of God, whose fidelity had merited a reward, close by his mediatorial son, that they might have the nearest inspection into this new display of the glory of their Creator, portion and Lord. But what is inactive contemplation, to energetic minds? It pleased God to make the angels actors in the scene. They are sent out to war against their own fallen hosts, who are warring against the salvation of man; they are sent out to be ministering spirits to all the heirs of salvation; that they may contemplate in them the awful malignity of the sin which is to be subdued, and the ineffable glories of the grace, mercy, and peace of God, which keep the spirits of his saints. Thus is made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God.*

But, the mediatorial reign of Jesus Christ embraces, in its comprehensive system of administration, Satan and all his hosts of fallen angels. This we may consider as another province of our Lord's moral empire; connected with this world, however, by vicinity, and still more by the cruel incursions and ravages of the hellish foe. Milton appears to have been the only uninspired man, that ever was capable of forming the

* Eph. iii. 10.

conception of a devil—the conception of "an archangel ruined." Men of ordinary minds may, however, ascertain from the scriptures, that the human condition is beset around with a host of invisible enemies. Satan tempted our first parents into sin; an achievement which, it would appear, he did not choose to intrust to any hands inferior to his own; and in the management of which, he prudently avoided making the assault upon Adam, who had received the knowledge of his duty immediately from God; but selected Eve, the weaker vessel, whose knowledge of duty was doubtless in part, and not improbably in the whole, derived from her husband's instruction. Eve, seduced from integrity, becomes the instrument to seduce Adam. And Satan having once gained power, continues ever since to reign in the hearts of the disobedient children of men; unless so far as his influences are checked, and his power destroyed, by Jesus, the saviour of sinners. Accordingly one of the views exhibited of our Lord's design in coming into this world, is, "that he might destroy the works of the devil;" that he might destroy not only death, "but him that has the power of death, that is the devil;" that he might "bind the strong man," satan, and then "spoil his house," by destroying the sin and misery which the arch-enemy has introduced. The wicked are pronounced the "children of the devil," because they obey him as a father, and do his works. He is represented as a "roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour." His objects are represented to be the infliction of all sorts of torments on men; the plunging of them into all sorts of crimes; to prevent all true religion from being introduced among his subjects; or to pervert and corrupt it, when it is

introduced; and to render a corrupted religion the most effectual instrument of profligacy and wretchedness on earth; and the surest and shortest road to hell. Even the saints are not exempted from the assaults of his fraud, imposture and violence. Hence they are thus exhorted by the spirit of Jesus: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."*

But, however formidable an enemy satan may be, we are not left to despair of the victory. The secret of the war is revealed to us. *Obsta principiis.*—"Resist the devil and he will flee from you."†—Parley and you are defeated!

* Eph. vi. 11—20. † James iv. 7.

But what we are principally to remark on this part of our subject, is the essential difference between Christ's mediatorial reign over the devil and his angels; and his mediatorial reign over holy angels and men. The end of the former government is destruction. The rebel angels will be conquered, and driven out of the world, and at the judgment day they will be condemned, and cast into hell; and Jesus Christ will vindicate the moral government of God, as being not only truly just, but equitable, mild, and merciful. Even the damned will not be able to say that they were unjustly, or too severely dealt with.

Having thus spoken of the mediatorial administration of Jesus over angels and devils, I proceed to the main subject—his mediatorial reign among men.

Let us enter upon this subject with an overawing sense of the deep personal interest which every human being has in it. Unquestionably there are many who are deceiving themselves with the fond opinion, that as they believe in God and providence, in the distinction between virtue and vice, and in a future state of rewards and punishments, they have religion enough, and are in as fair a road to heaven as any men. But if it shall appear that the actual government of this world is in the hands of Jesus Christ; that it is with him that men have to do, and to him that they will have to account; it will follow that the unbeliever in Christ might as well be an atheist.

CHAPTER III.

THE MEDIATORIAL REIGN OF JESUS CHRIST EMBRACES ALL MANKIND.

"ALL power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations."

In the foregoing chapter I spoke of the authority committed to our mediator over the fallen spirits, the devil and his angels; the object of which government is the destruction of their rebel hosts, and of the influence which they have usurped in the empire of God. I spoke also respecting his mediatorial headship over the holy angels; whom he does not redeem by his blood; but whom he employs as ministering spirits, to forward the salvation of those who were redeemed by his blood; and whose happiness, probably the specific reward of their probationary fidelity, consists in the glorious employment of co-operating with the son of God, in the dispensation of grace and mercy to mankind; and in the advantages which they possess in this new office, to contemplate and enjoy the wondrous perfections of Jehovah. Setting then these subjects aside, let us proceed to that subject which interests ourselves more than all other subjects under the sun.—The mediatorial reign of Jesus over mankind.

And here it is absolutely evident, certain, and undeniable, that the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus embraces all mankind; every man, woman, and child of Adam's family, that have been, are, or ever shall be on this earth. "All power is given to me—on earth—therefore, go and teach all nations." My father hath anointed me universal sovereign over heaven and earth: Heaven has submitted to my government; but earth continues in rebellion, and he has armed me with all his authority: Go quickly into all the nations of the earth, and preach my gospel to all my rebel subjects. So far as your opportunities reach, preach the gospel to every creature of them; as you shall answer at my bar for your diligence. Proclaim my laws aloud for their obedience, teach them all things which I have commanded you. Beseech them by all my love, command them by all my authority, that they cast down the weapons of their impious rebellion, accept my pardon, and submit to my laws: assuring them, that if they thus submit to my authority, I will secure their acceptance with my father. Pledge my life for their life: As I live, they shall live also;* none shall pluck them out of my hand!

We are sure then that the authority of Christ extends to all mankind; that the ministers of the gospel are sent to all mankind; that the gospel is to be preached to all mankind; that the gospel in all its riches and fulness, with all its grace and authority, in its totality and in its details; the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, is to be preached to every sinner without exception; and to every sinner in the same fulness and freedom. If we are not secured on this point from every shadow of darkness or of doubt—Then

* John xiv. 19.

farewell, for me, the hope of assurance in any moral truth, for ever and ever.

It is obvious, and worthy of particular and profound attention, that it is to sinners, as such, to sinners viewed as sinners, that the apostles are sent, and to whom they are commanded to preach the gospel. "All nations."—And the nations of the earth were at that time, in profound darkness; their religion was idolatry; devils were their gods; human sacrifices very commonly were their expiatory offerings; and their most prominent acts of religious worship were a mixture of lewdness, drunkenness, and insane revelry. The abominations of their religion are unutterable and inconceivable. Yet to them the gospel of Jesus was to be preached. Salvation through the blood of Jesus was to be offered them, and they were to be commanded to turn from their vain idols, and horrible rites, and abandoned practices, to the living God, for pardon, purification, and eternal life. The only difference among them, was between the guilty and the more guilty; between the vile and the more vile; but sin and death reigned over them all. And therefore the merciful son of God sends the gospel of salvation equally to them all. Who shall dare to interpolate a document issued by the lips, and sealed with the blood, of the son of God; who shall dare to limit to a few, that which he has made common to all!

How any preacher of the gospel who studies his commission, (and it is what, as officers under the captain of salvation, they should all study more than any thing else) how any minister who studies his commission, should doubt whether he should preach salvation to all sinners, is to me quite inconceivable. Yet some ministers have doubted, whether they ought

so to preach salvation to all; and some have denied the duty of doing so. We shall find in due season, that these doubts, and this denial, have sprung out of some thin metaphysical speculations, in which they were so unfortunate as to engage themselves; but from the ministerial commission, or from the Bible at large, no such doubt ever did spring.

I have many a time studied the document now under consideration, to try if I could find on what part of it a doubt could be hung, respecting the universality of the gospel offer and call. The only sophism which I could imagine, is the following; and a very poor sophism it is indeed: yet poor as it is, I should never have been able to imagine it, had I not met it in the conclusions of certain theological reasonings; of which reasonings I shall only say, that either the first principles are false, or the logic faulty; but the conclusions themselves are most detestable. The sophism I intend is this. That the apostles were indeed commanded to teach all nations—But it was only after their hearers had believed and given visible proof of their faith by baptism, that they ought to be taught to do all that Christ Jesus commands.

Let us examine this a little. I ask first what was it then which the apostles were to teach all nations? It must have been either their DUTY, or their PRIVILEGES, or SOMETHING THAT WAS NEITHER THEIR PRIVILEGE NOR DUTY. This enumeration exhausts the subject. Let us examine the particulars.

I. What PRIVILEGES were the apostles to teach all nations, and all sinners in all these nations? Were they to teach them the privilege of coming unto Jesus that they might have life?—were they to teach them the privilege of pardon through his blood?—were they to

teach them the privilege of coming to a throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace in the time of need?—were they to teach them the privilege of walking with God in holy communion?—were they to teach them the privilege of a glorious resurrection?—were they to teach them the privilege of eternal life through Jesus Christ? If they had a right to teach them all this, I grant that it was a great deal, and will bring with it all that, in respect to privilege, I wish to plead for. Because the apostles would then preach to all nations, and to all sinners, that they had the privilege of coming to Christ for salvation—that they had the privilege of obtaining pardon through his blood—that they had the privilege of coming to a throne of grace to ask mercy and grace to help them in time of need—that they had the privilege of returning from their sins, and walking with God in new obedience and mutual friendship—that they had the privilege of hoping for a joyful resurrection as the result of such a conversion—and that they have the privilege of eternal life as the result of the whole! If the apostles preached all these privileges to all the heathen, to all sinners who heard them, I grant, so far as privilege is concerned, that they did preach the gospel. And is not this the identical thing which we mean, when we say that free pardon of sin and friendship with God, through the blood of Jesus, are offered to all who hear the gospel; that grace and eternal life and salvation are freely offered to all! It is the very thing that we mean, and the very thing that the ministerial commission, and the whole Bible mean! And if the apostles were not authorised to teach sinners these privileges, I can conceive no other privilege that

they could teach them—except it be—the privilege of going to hell!

Oh! aye! it will be said, this is running a logical process with great celerity, but it is off the line of divine truth. The apostles were instructed to declare that all the privileges mentioned were indeed intended by God for SOME persons on earth.—But they could not tell any sinner that these privileges were his!—This I presume is the great Goliath: for it figures so prodigiously in some theological systems, that they would be nothing without it. And, therefore, oh reader, examine it! Is it not the very nature of a PRIVILEGE, that the person to whom it pertains has a legal interest in it, and may make use of that interest if he pleases? If then the apostles could not assure sinners that they had an interest in the above privileges, and might if they pleased plead and enjoy the full benefit of them,—then I assert that they would not preach PRIVILEGE to sinners at all. This is a sound logical conclusion. But reader it is not my conclusion; nor thy conclusion only. It is the direct, avowed, and boasted conclusion, of the theological speculators who deny the right of the gospel minister to offer salvation in Christ's name to all mankind. And consistently with their principles do they preach; for they do not offer salvation to sinners at all!

II. What DUTIES to Jesus Christ, were the apostles commanded to teach sinners? I say duties to Jesus Christ; for be it remembered that Jesus is now the sovereign of the world; that the apostles are his heralds; and that it is HIS law, and it alone, which they are to teach. What duties to Jesus Christ, are the apostles to teach all nations, all mankind, and every man who hears them? Are they to command all man-

kind to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation?—Are they to teach all sinners to repent and be baptized?—Are they to teach all sinners to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?—Are they to teach sinners to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, and not upon earth?—Are they to teach sinners to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and their neighbours as themselves? If so, then they are to teach all sinners to do whatsoever Christ has commanded! Which is the very conclusion I wish to come to. But take the other side of the question, and suppose the apostles were not authorised to teach sinners to obey Christ.—Then, since there is no law, there can be no transgression.—Unbelief is no sin.—It is no offence against him to trample his blood under foot.—It is no sin against him to work all impiety upon system, and iniquity with greediness. He has no right to be angry, he gave no law, and there can be no transgression. And he will never inflict judgment on any man for not doing what was not commanded; unless he be an unjust judge!—This is the conclusion, reader; and it is a correct and logical conclusion. For if sinners are not bound to obey Christ, disobedience is no sin: If they are obliged to obey in one thing, then are they obliged to obey him in all things: If they are not obliged to obey some things in his law, then they are exempt from his law, and cannot possibly violate it. And had it not occurred among men, one would never have conjectured the moral possibility of the event, that ministers of the gospel should be found to tell sinners, that faith in Jesus Christ is not their duty, and that unbelief is not their sin.

It follows from the two foregoing articles, that either the apostles were to teach all sinners all the privileges

of the gospel, or to teach them to obey all things, whatsoever the Lord Jesus had commanded—or—which is the remaining branch of our trilemma,

III. That the Lord Jesus commissioned his apostles to go and teach all nations, all sinners who would listen to them, SOMETHING WHICH WAS NEITHER THEIR PRIVILEGE NOR THEIR DUTY.——I am tired of such foolish, thoughtless, impious suppositions. The reader who has not the understanding to scout at once the above supposition, is incapable of instruction. His mind is either naturally destitute of moral intuition; or it is totally spoiled *"with philosophy and vain deceit,"* so that no human ratiocination has any chance to cure it. If I may judge the moral pulsations of my own heart, I feel no sensations but these of profound, overwhelming, and almost annihilating sorrow, to think that such conclusions against the sovereign grace, and sovereign authority, of the Lord our Redeemer, should ever have been acquiesced in by any of our race. I do not insult over any, it would not become me, *"Haud ignarus mali miseris succurrere disco.* But I do pity the unhappy man, who is doomed to grapple with the prince of darkness, while there is such a sophism as this in his creed.

From the whole I draw these most assured conclusions—that the gracious reign of Jesus Christ embraces all mankind—That the preachers of the gospel are commissioned to preach the whole of it to all mankind.—That they ought to display every privilege which it contains as the free gift and offer of Jesus Christ to every sinner who hears them.—And that they ought to command every sinner, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear, to obey all things whatsoever the Lord Jesus has commanded in his holy law. I leave my argument to the most rigorous examination of those

who deal in argumentation. If it be wrong it merits no quarter—but I hope it will never need to supplicate the boon.

We shall now propose a couple of questions for the reader's very serious consideration. Since it has been proved that Jesus Christ actually has authorised and commanded his ministers to offer, in his name, eternal life to all mankind, I ask—

I. *Has Jesus Christ the power to verify his own commission, by bestowing on all mankind, that which he has commanded his ministers to offer them?*

If he has not the power of granting salvation to all—*By what moral attribute of Deity can you justify him for offering it to all?*

Again, since Jesus Christ, as the acting sovereign of this world, commands all, to whom his gospel comes, to believe and to obey the whole.—

II. *It is the anxious desire and wish of Jesus Christ that all should obey him, and be saved?*

If not—*by what moral principle does this sovereign issue this law?*

I am ready, even at this present moment, to argue these two questions. But I will not. There is a moral partnership between an author and his reader: the reader is bound to do something, as well as the writer. Let the reader, then, do his partnership-duty, if he expects to receive his dividend of the profits.

There are, however, in the church of God, many who deal little in general argumentation: texts of scripture, so plain that the heavenly traveller, though a simpleton, cannot mistake them, form their rule. These compose the steps of the ladder, by which such simple ones mount up into the heavens, and hold communion with their Lord. Their way is short, and

therefore it is no wonder that they so frequently pay their visits to the celestial hall. For their sake, and for the sake of the truth, and for the sake of those who are sometimes seen wasting the energies of fine intellects, in order to reach, by logic, the goal to which faith would have brought them at once; I shall examine the Scriptures at large, to determine this point, WHAT IT IS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL. And if I cannot show that the conclusions which I have drawn in the foregoing argument, are the direct and universal dictate of the spirit of God, speaking in the Scriptures; then let darkness cover the whole logical process; let neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars shine upon it; and let it be blotted out from the remembrance of man. But if I shall show that the conclusions alluded to, are the very dictates of the Holy Ghost, all over the Scriptures, then let no man be ambitious of refuting me—lest haply he should be found to fight against God. The Scriptures, after all, contain the sum total of what man, in his present state, can ascertain of true religion. God's word is a light to the feet, and a lamp to the path; and they who are most familiar with it, and who are in the habit of drawing from it directly, whatever they want, as a rule of practice or opinion, or source of consolation, are most likely to excel as sound thriving christians. The human mind, like the chamelion, assumes the hue of the objects upon which it reposes; hence it is chiefly while he is studying the Holy Scriptures, that the pious man feels that union of light, solemnity and purity, which characterises him as a new creature, and a candidate for glory.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL WHICH THE APOSTLES WERE COMMANDED TO PREACH TO ALL NATIONS, AND TO EVERY HUMAN CREATURE.

THE sacred writers are by no means tenacious of particular formularies of words in delivering the message of God to mankind: I do not recollect an instance in which two of these writers had occasion to record the same speech, or to narrate the same event, where they have used precisely the same words; but many instances can be produced, in which their phraseology is various, though their subject be the same. They have given us even the Lord's prayer in different phraseology. Their object was to convey to mankind their meaning, and not to attach any importance whatever to the particular words and phrases which expressed it. There is nothing in them of the almost ludicrous accuracy of Homer's heralds among gods and men, who are sure to deliver their messages, in precisely the words, letters and syllables, in which they received them, without a jot or aspiration of difference. If men are not honest, no formula of words will bind; if they are honest, they will not be at any great loss about the meaning of the Holy Ghost, when he calls them to their duty. I make these observations

because Mark has delivered the ministerial commission, in terms different from those used by Matthew. His enunciation is this—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."* Every thing which divine wisdom has done, I take for granted, was done on purpose; and every good effect which results from any divine act, I take for granted, was intended and designed to result from that act. Now I apprehend that the intention of the varied phraseology which has been mentioned, was this, that if any honest inquirer should fall into a doubt, or any subtle speculator should broach an error, from the peculiar phraseology of one writer; the different phraseology of another writer, might correct the mistake, or furnish the means of refuting the error. I do not know that there is any thing in Matthew's report of the ministerial commission, which can excite a doubt respecting its meaning, or furnish any plausible handle to a theorist for its perversion. At the same time Mark's account of it is more precise, and brings some points into a more distinct view, than Matthew has done; while Matthew has a similar advantage in respect to other points. For instance, Matthew and Mark both represent the apostles as sent to the whole of the human family, to all nations, to the whole world—but Mark's phrase, "Preach the gospel to every creature," is something more precise than Matthew's, "teach all nations; though they both mean the same thing, namely, that the apostles should preach the whole gospel to every human being, to the extent of their opportunities. Mark has placed in the clearest light, the fact, that the efficacy of the gospel depends solely on

* Mark xvi. 15.

the faith of the hearer; and its inefficacy only on the unbelief of the hearer—"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned;" points which, though implied, are not formally stated by Matthew. While Matthew, on the other hand, brings into bold relief, the duty of every creature who hears the gospel to obey "all things" commanded by Jesus Christ; a point which Mark involves in the general phrase, "preach the gospel to every creature."

It is worthy of remark, that neither Matthew nor Mark represent Jesus as entering into any explanation of the nature of the gospel, at the time when he gave his apostles their commission to preach it. Nor is it likely that any such explanation was at that time given. It is certain that they did at that time know something about the gospel, it is as certain that Jesus Christ did not fully reveal to them his gospel before his ascension. For we are informed, that although he spent the forty days between his resurrection and ascension in speaking to them of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" "yet he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou, at this time, restore the kingdom unto Israel? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power: but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and

unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."*

It is plain then, that the apostles had not, at the ascension of their Lord, nor till the day of Pentecost, which happened fifty days after the passover, at which our Lord suffered, and a week after his ascension, a full understanding of the gospel, neither were they endowed with power to preach it. They were not, however, entirely ignorant of it. They had heard their master recommend the Jewish Scriptures as testifying of him the Saviour of men: they had, for three years, heard himself preaching the doctrines of his own kingdom, as far as was at that season proper; but it was not till the day of Pentecost, that the plenary unction of the Holy Ghost was given them, which taught them, as they needed, the perfect doctrine of their Lord's kingdom, and armed them with every faculty, capacity and power, to proclaim it abroad, and to defend it from all forms of opposition.

If then we would know what is the gospel which should be preached to every creature, in every nation under the sun, we have three questions to solve.

1. What was the gospel which the prophets of old, down to John the baptist inclusive, preached?

2. What was the gospel which Jesus Christ preached, while he was on the earth?

3. What was the gospel which the apostles, after the days of Pentecost, preached among all nations, according to the sacred writings?

If these subjects should be thought trite, it must also be admitted that they are important; and too

* Acts, i. 3—9.

important, I take them to be, ever to need an apology for their introduction. Time will show, that it is only in plain and trite truths, visible to every understanding, that a remedy is to be sought against those wild and wicked metaphysical speculations, which corrupt our press, poison our pulpits, torture our consciences, paralize our energies, and excite the apprehension, that if matters move on in their present channel, the next generation may probably find the gospel banished from those cities where it is at present assaulted, and driven into the recesses and dells of the mountains, to seek shelter among a simple Piedmontese-like-people, who have, happily for themselves, too little of the wisdom and learning of this world, to despise the wisdom of God displayed in the gospel of salvation.

THE GOSPEL OF THE PROPHETS.

We cannot refrain from imagining to ourselves the manner in which the apostles studied the Scriptures, in order to discover the gospel which they were commanded to preach. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed as a succour to human infirmity, not for a pillow to human sloth. The apostles were, equally with ourselves, bound to cultivate their talents, and search the Scriptures, with all diligence. Imagine to yourselves then, an apostle alighting on such a passage as the following: "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors: Unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom:

and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things." "Receive my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold." "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness: my fruit is better than gold; yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures." "Now, therefore, hearken unto me; for blessed are all they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death."*

We presume that an apostle would, from such a passage, conclude, that wisdom chose so public a station as "the tops of the high places," and "the gates of the city," in order that she might address all men; we presume that our apostle would understand by the phrases "men," and "sons of men," all without exception who hear the sound of wisdom's voice; we presume that he would conclude that wisdom addresses them all as sinners, since she calls them "simple ones:" that she offers her heavenly treasures to every one of them, and commands them all alike to accept and to enjoy: that she promises to bestow all her blessings in all their richness, on every one who

* Prov. viii.

would listen to her instructions; while she emphatically declares that all who hate her, love death.

This is but a single passage from the Old Testament; but it may be quoted as the representative of the doctrine taught by all the ancient prophets. So freely are the promises of God, fraught with all sorts of blessings, offered to sinners of mankind without limitation or distinction; and so authoritatively is the most imperative, as well as the most delightful, of all commands.—TURN UNTO ME AND LIVE—addressed by Jehovah to sinners of every description, that I am afraid of exhausting the patience of my reader with numerous quotations. I shall produce just one more, and then refer the reader to the Old Testament at large. "Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel: Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"*

We have here Jehovah's oath to put the matter out of all doubt; that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live: and having assured them of this point, he follows his oath with a speech, in which the deepest pathos of infinite mercy blends with the utmost majesty of infinite authority.—"Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die O house of Israel." Let us then go on from the ancient prophets, and listen a while to

* Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S GOSPEL.

Among those that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater prophet than John the baptist. This is the testimony of his master. John came in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way, and make a straight path for the approach of God's Messiah. We are informed that the burden of his preaching was this, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* That he preached the same doctrine to all that heard him, no serious inquirer after the fact will find any reason to doubt. Or if a doubt should at all arise, we shall remove it by showing that John actually did preach the gospel, and the whole of it according to his dispensation, to the very worst and wickedest of his hearers, who were as bad and as wicked as it is possible to conceive men to be. The men I have in view were a set of most desperate wretches. They had worked up religion itself into a system of impiety, and were profligates on principle. Even the herald of divine mercy, denounces them as a "generation of vipers." Yet to these very vipers did he preach the gospel of salvation. "But when he saw many of the pharisees and sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree

* Mat. iii. 2.

which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to to bear; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."* Thus we find that John the baptist preached the gospel, offered salvation, and taught obedience, to all who heard him, and in a special and pointed manner to the most wicked of all his hearers. But John has directed us to go to the Great Teacher; "whose shoes," said he, "I am unworthy to bear:" "He must increase, I must decrease;" "behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" "he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." With this exhortation we shall comply: "Lord to whom should we go but unto thee, thou hast the words of eternal life."

* Mat. iii. 7—12.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOSPEL AS PREACHED BY JESUS CHRIST.

I REFER my reader for full satisfaction on this subject to the four gospels. I produce only a few passages, sufficient, however, to answer my purpose, which is to show that salvation was freely offered by Christ to all the sinners who heard him; equally and in the same manner offered to them all; and that these sinners were equally and in the same manner commanded to accept, and to enjoy that salvation.

It is perfectly certain, that our Lord preached the gospel to every one who attended on his ministry. It was to all that he said: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* He addressed every individual in his audience when he said: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."† It was to all who heard him, and to all who ever shall hear his gospel, that he has given that invaluable bracelet, composed of alternate links of precepts and promises: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh,

* Mat. iv. 17. † Mat. vii. 13. 14.

receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

My vision is overpowered and absorbed by this effulgence of the light of heavenly mercy. How can any man after hearing this declaration of the son of God, imagine that among those who heard him, there were some whom he was neither able nor willing to save? I cannot imagine the mental process, which prevents the light from reaching his understanding. To me it appears that the duties are all required by the absolute authority of God; and that the blessings attached to those duties are mixed and incorporated with their very essence by divine mercy, so that the duty and its privilege never can be separated. The Lord Jesus does assert, that if his heavenly Father were to withhold his blessing from those who ask it in a proper manner, he would be less merciful than a parent among sinful men: And by as much as God's mercy exceeds the mercy of sinful men, so much more certain is it that our heavenly Father will hear our prayers, and give us all needful things which we ask, than that our earthly parents will grant us our petitions. Now one of the highest assurances upon earth is this, that an earthly parent will give bread to his hungry babe, who asks it with the supplicating eye and pity-moving accents of hunger. If then this be one of our most assured hopes from

* Mat. vii. 7—11.

human mercy, and if God's mercy be infinitely beyond human mercy; then have we infinite assurance that he will give salvation to every one who asks it in a proper manner.

I know indeed that dust has been thrown into the eyes of our understanding, by an allegation that the promise of life is conditional, and that its fulfilment depends on faith. That proposition I not only admit, but shall in due time make it the basis of some important arguments. There are however some old sophisms on the subject of conditional promises, and some new sophisms also, which I shall endeavour to keep from the infirmities of old age. But the details of this subject must for some time lie by. One remark will at present suffice.

I say then that *hypothetical* propositions have as absolute a truth, as those which are *categorical.* Logicians will understand these terms, and assent without hesitation to the assertion advanced. For the sake of those however who do not approach truth on the stilts of technical phraseology, I shall express the matter more simply thus:—If God has established an indissoluble connection between faith and salvation; and between unbelief and condemnation, as he certainly has done, then we get the following propositions.

1. That so long as men continue in unbelief they are in a state of condemnation, and if they die in that state they will be lost.

2. When a sinner obtains faith, he is then, but not before, in a state of salvation; he hath eternal life dwelling in him.

3. If all men were to continue in unbelief, they would all be lost.

4. If they were all to believe, they would all be saved.

And therefore there is nothing wanting to secure the salvation of all mankind, except faith in Jesus Christ.

The idea that there is something in the nature of Christ's sacrifice which renders it incapable of saving some men is a most frightful error. It is not in the Bible; nor is there any thing in the Bible from which it can be inferred. Nor, so far as I know, has any man ever attempted to deduce it from the Scriptures by a simple examination of their meaning. And I predict that no man ever will do this thing. The Scriptures never do assign any cause for the condemnation of gospel despisers, save their own unbelief; which however is not alone, but accompanied with a fearful progeny of impieties and crimes. On the other hand the Scriptures never represent any thing as necessary to the salvation of any man but faith in Jesus Christ. A faith, however, which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and subdueth the devil, the world, and the flesh, and enricheth its possessor with all the fruits of piety and goodness.

The value of that theory, which represents the righteousness of Jesus as incapable of saving any but the elect, will in due time be examined as a piece of philosophical speculation; and its merits in that point of view ascertained with absolute impartiality, and with whatever powers of judgment we can bring to the tribunal. In the mean time we go to the law and to the testimony, in order to ascertain the articles of our christian creed, which we are to receive and hold fast in the simplicity of christian faith: and we shall go out on this errand, under a full impression of that word, "He that seeketh, findeth."

I shall here extract the following passage from the commission which Jesus gave his apostles to preach the gospel in the land of Judea, previous to his death. It runs thus: "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying. Go not into the way of the gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house salute it. And if the house be worthy let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city,"—"what I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops." —See the whole tenth chapter of Matthew.

This commission indeed limits the apostles to the land of Judea; and a special reason for the limitation is assigned; "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come." Within the limits of their commission, however, it was universal. They were to preach the gospel to all who would hear it. They were to preach it to the worst, as well as to the

best of men. Indeed a very subtle strickler for salvation by human merit, might from the phrase "go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," allege (it has been alleged) that the gospel should be preached only to profligates; while the world may contain men of such piety and virtue, as to be able to do very well without it. This is a sophism, but it is not by any means so glaring and revolting a sophism, as that which asserts that Jesus Christ has no salvation to bestow upon many to whom he orders it to be preached; or that there are some men who have no right to accept and enjoy the salvation proclaimed in the gospel. And here again salvation and condemnation are made to turn upon the acceptation or rejection of the gospel message. There is no question at all about Christ's ability to give salvation to all; that is taken for granted. There is no question at all about the right of the hearers, to accept salvation. And indeed of all the RIGHTS, that ever have been agitated on this whimsical planet of ours, the most extraordinary are couched in these two questions. Have I a right to accept what God offers me! Have I a right to do what God commands me!

Why should I quote the parable of the sower, who went out and sowed the same seed on all sorts of ground? Why should I quote the fisherman, who cast his net into the sea, and caught whatever he could catch, good and bad? Why should I quote, and why should I not quote, that glorious passage, which has so often shook loose the fangs of the fiend, and disengaged the lacerated and convulsed conscience from his satanic grasp, and brought salvation joy and triumph into the soul of the disenthralled sinner! "All things are delivered unto me, of my father, and

no man knoweth the son but the father, neither knoweth any man the father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

The law of the Lord is a light to the feet, and a lamp to the path. But we might well wonder if Satan had not turned commentator on the above passage, and endeavored to limit to a few, those luminous offers of grace and salvation which Jesus has made universally to all. It is not my purpose to stop and waste time on his sophistries. A single remark will do for the whole of them. Whatever was the *burden*, intended by our Lord, it was the *burden*, it was the *labour* of sinful men, who had not yet come unto him for rest, who had not yet taken upon them his light and easy yoke and burden of moral servitude, which is the source of all true happiness. And God knows that many a heavy burden our sinful race does bear: a burden of sins, a burden of unsatisfied and insatiable desires; whole mountains of sorrow, often aggravated by whole mountains of remorse and despair. As our Lord speaks in general terms, we shall honour his grace, by giving them their utmost possible latitude of meaning. We are sure he can deliver us from all our burdens; we are sure he offers to do so. Come to Jesus with all your burdens of sin, sorrow, despair, or whatever they are; come to Jesus, and he will give you rest; you shall have peace for your souls; and

* Mat. xi. 27—30.

his yoke you shall find to be gold and ivory, your riches, your ornament, and your delight.

I think I must already have furnished sufficient specimens of our Lord's sermons and doctrine, to justify the following conclusions: That he preached the gospel to every creature that heard him. That he offered salvation to every creature that heard him. That he commanded every creature who heard him to believe in him for salvation. And that all his commissions to his apostles, authorised, and absolutely commanded them to preach the gospel, in the same manner, to every creature who should hear them. Again I repeat my questions, and I insist that my reasoning readers shall think them worthy of consideration:

1. Was Jesus able to give what he offered, to all to whom he did offer it?—if not, where was the mercy, or even the justice of the offer?

2. Was Jesus willing that all whom he commanded to believe on him for salvation, should obey his command?—if not where was the morality of the legislator?

But I waive for the present the decision of these not very mysterious problems: for indeed it is much my wish, that the reader should decide them for himself, and trace the conclusions to which the solution infallibly leads. And now let us proceed to inquire in what manner the apostles preached the gospel, after the plenary unction of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOSPEL AS PREACHED BY THE APOSTLES.

I REFER the reader to the first sermon preached by the apostle Peter to the assembled multitude of the Jews at the feast of Pentecost. It is found in the second chapter of the Acts of the apostles; it is too long for insertion; the whole of that chapter should be read; I must content myself with quoting two verses. Verse 21. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Verse 38. "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost."

The first of these verses represents calling on the name of the Lord, which implies, and is the expression of, faith in Jesus Christ, as the only requisite to salvation. And in the second, the apostle addresses each one of his auditors personally and particularly—"every one of you." "Every one of you repent—"every one of you be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus," believing in him as the Messiah of God—"every one of you" be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "for the remission of your sins"—and ye shall, "every one of you," receive the Holy Ghost. I defy mortal language to produce a formula

of speech which shall more definitely individualize each man then present, than the speech used by Peter. Here was the first of the apostles preaching his first sermon, I may say, to the whole Jewish nation; for we are told that Jerusalem was at that time crowded with devout Jews, "from every nation under heaven;" who all rushed together to hear and to see the wonderful things which had happened.

If I did not believe that there was remission of sin in the blood of Jesus for them all, I should not hesitate to pronounce Peter a very audacious man, and a bad preacher. How dared he to command every one of them to seek remission of sin by the blood of Christ, if there was not remission of sin for every one of them in the blood of Christ? Let us try for a moment, assuming it as doctrine, that the *demerit* of the elect is the measure of Christ's *merit*, or, in other words, that there is not merit in Christ's blood to save any but the elect; assuming this, let us try to interpret Peter's sermon.

If I believe that Peter commands them all to seek remission of sin in the blood of Christ, and that there is remission of sin in that blood only for the elect; then I must conclude that they were all elected; and, by the same rule, I must conclude that all those to whom similar commands are given by Christ and his apostles, were elected persons; and in fine that were this sermon of Peter's preached to all mankind, then must every one of them be elected persons; all this I would, as a reasonable creature, be obliged to believe; and all this I absolutely would believe, since I believe Peter spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Though when I read of the subsequent lives and death of some of these men, I could devise no

way by which they could reach heaven; it could not be by faith, for they were infidels; it could not be by piety, for they were blasphemers; it could not be by morality, for they were infamous persecutors drenched in the blood of the saints.

Again, if there be remission of sin in the blood of Christ for none but the elect, and if I believe (as from history I am compelled to believe) that there were among his audience some who were not elected; then I must believe that if he commanded these unelected persons to seek salvation and remission of sin in the blood of Christ, he was a bad man; for he recommended a remedy to his perishing fellow-mortals which could not profit them. Or if I suppose that he directs only some of them to seek remission of sin in the blood of Christ; then I must turn critic, and insist that Peter was a bad preacher; and so ignorant of language that he did not know the difference between SOME and ALL; and therefore, he offered remission of sin in the blood of Christ "to every one" of his immense audience, while he meant only to say that there was remission of sin in that blood for some of them.

Again, if the blood of Jesus contains remission of sin, only for the elect, then Peter could not offer remission to any of them, unless he knew the elect from the non-elect. It cannot admit of a question, that Peter knew nothing about the election of any, or all, of his audience; it is highly probable that he never thought of election at the time; it is absolutely certain that his preaching is not modified by any consideration of election. He knew that they were sinners, and he knew that there was remission of sin in the blood of Christ for all sinners; and he had

Christ's authority to command all sinners to come unto him for life; declaring that he who came by faith should have remission through his blood; but that he who by unbelief should refuse, should never have remission, because he rejected the blood of remission.

Indeed if the doctrine of election is any way connected with the merit of Christ's atonement, and the free offer of salvation; on the one hand the preacher cannot offer salvation to any one, because he does not know who is, or is not, elected; and on the other hand, no sinner can see his authority for so much as asking salvation, because he cannot know whether he is elected.

If in attempting to keep out of one class of difficulties, I should, as is usual with our race, rush into another; and say that salvation through Jesus, is offered only to *convinced* sinners; I still disturb the truth. It is certain, that by this allegation I give up the idea, that it is *election* which limits the capable application of the blood of Christ. Many are brought to *deep convictions* of sin, who are not eventually saved, and who consequently were not elected. If then salvation by Jesus may be offered to all convicted sinners, it may be offered to those who are not elected.

But this hypothesis, which limits the offer of salvation to *convinced* sinners, though preferable to some other hypotheses, is both false and dangerous. If it be true, it will follow that provided a sinner can only harden his conscience and remain insensible to the danger of destruction; he is under no obligation to believe the gospel. The truth is, there ought to be no limitation. Preach the gospel to every creature, is the command of Jesus! And Peter com-

plying literally with his commission, charged guilt on the whole of his audience, and commanded every one of them to look to the blood of Jesus for remission.

We have heard Peter opening the gospel dispensation, by his first sermon to his countrymen the Jews, let us go down with him to Cesarea, to witness how he conducts himself in the first essay made to convert the heathen. The reader will have the goodness to save me the trouble of transcription, by turning to the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. I shall, however, transcribe two verses. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sin."* I hope comments are unnecessary.

Let the reader turn to the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and read Paul's sermon, on Mars' hill, to the philosophers of Athens, which concludes thus: "And the time of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."† This short but admirable sermon, is distinguished for the grandeur of its ideas, and the exact connexion of the argument. The unity of God, the unity of the human family, the design of God in creating them, namely that they might seek after him as their patron, who had created them.

* Acts x. 42. 43. † Acts xvii. 30. 31.

The brutish and debased state of mankind who, forsaking the true God, had made themselves gods of wood and stone; the design of the gospel, which is to call on all men every where to repent, and to place themselves under the government of Jesus Christ, whom his father has constituted judge of the whole world; and given mankind full assurance of his authority, by raising him up from the dead.

One quotation from the last of all the apostles who was spared on the earth to spread the christian faith and organise the christian church, and I am done with this part of my subject. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely. For I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

Thus closes the Sacred Volume! Blessed God, what a full and free, and universal offer of salvation is here made to all mankind without exception; and by whom is the offer made! Jesus, the son of God, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning

star, says: COME! The spirit of Jesus, the spirit of life, of truth, and of holiness; who giveth wisdom to the wise, and righteousness to the upright, and is the immediate source and cause of every thing which dignifies and ennobles man, the spirit of Jesus says: COME! The bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy church, who knows, because she enjoys, the riches of the grace of her Lord; the church of the living God, throwing open all her doors; by the voice of all her ministers, by the voice of all her members, by the voice of her praises and her prayers; by the voice of her baptismal font of purification, by the voice of her consecrated feast of bread and wine, the lively emblems of the body and blood of Jesus; the church cries, COME! And let every one who heareth them, shout aloud to every one who heareth him, and cry, COME! And whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely!

Awful is the seal appended to this INVITATION, as well as to the rest of this book, and by parity of reason, to the whole of the inspired word; an impression strongly marked by God Almighty's authority, and avenging justice. Such an INVITATION deserves such a sanction! I will not risk the penalty. I will never take from the book of God this gracious invitation to all sinners to come and take of the waters of life freely. I will never take from that invitation its most absolute universality, by any sort of limitation whatever. I will never propose, second, aid, abet, or tolerate, any system, theory, doctrine, or verbology, which might go to prove, or to insinuate, or even to whisper a hint, that there is not water enough for all who are invited—that would insinuate that Jesus Christ has not the power of furnishing igh of the

water of life, to save the lives of all whom he invites, though every man should come to him—that would hint that Jesus Christ is not willing that his invitation should be accepted by all to whom he has given it! Against all such theories, systems, allegations, and verbologies, war, eternal war for me; without quarter, truce or parley. Though an angel from heaven were to propose such a theory to me, as the gospel of Jesus Christ, I would not believe him. Even if my reason were so lost, perplexed, and bewildered, as to lend me no aid; my faith would be sufficient. But blessed be God, my reason is entirely on the same side with faith. And at this moment she is whispering in my ear, that she too is a servant of Jesus Christ, and has claims to be allowed to plead his cause within her own limits. She begs leave to borrow the armour of faith, and to try her fate among the philosophers. She shall be indulged.

Reader, the following are the pieces of armour which she is putting on. Or, dropping the figure, the following are articles of christian truth, and elements of the christian faith, which I have proved by the demonstration of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures.

I. That all mankind are in a state of sin and misery, out of which they cannot redeem themselves; but must for ever remain under the wrath and curse of God, unless some deliverer be found.

II. That God sent forth his son made under the broken law, to redeem them that were under the law; and that Jesus Christ, by his obedience and sufferings, did perfectly, fully, and finally satisfy Jehovah's justice, of which the father gave undoubted testimony

by raising him up from the dead, thereby declaring that the law had no more to demand.

III. That Jehovah appeased by the satisfaction made by his son, has given into his hands all mankind, and all their relations to the things which are in this, and to the things which are in other worlds; that therefore at present, the father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment into the hands of the son; and hath commanded all men to obey his son as they ought to obey the Father, saying: "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR HIM!"

IV. That Jesus Christ assuming the government of this world, has commissioned his heralds, to preach the law of his kingdom, which is the gospel, to all his subjects, even the most rebellious of them.

V. That Jesus Christ did, and does by his commissioned heralds, freely offer to all who hear the gospel, eternal life, including pardon and peace with God, and the eternal enjoyments of heaven.

VI. That Jesus Christ did, and by his commissioned heralds doth, command every human creature, who hears the gospel, to accept pardon, peace, and eternal life, and return to his duty, and to happiness.

VII. That according to the promise of Jesus Christ, eternal life shall be enjoyed by all those who accept his free offer by a living faith.

VIII. That according to the threatening of Jesus Christ, he will inflict eternal death upon all those who disobey his command, by rejecting his offer of life, for this crime first and chiefly, that they did not believe in him, and then for all their other sins.

These eight grand principles of gospel truth, I assert I have fully demonstrated to be directly and in-

tentionally the meaning of the spirit of God speaking in the Scripture. I also assert that every one of these eight articles is as clearly taught in the Bible, as any thing else that can be named. And finally I assert that it is impossible for the human mind to conceive how any thing possibly could be taught more distinctly and plainly, than all the above principles are taught in the Scriptures. I have expressed them as plainly as I can, there is no technical nicety of meaning attached to any of my expressions. If any man of technical habits, should hesitate about the meaning of any of these propositions, which I hope will not be the case, let him ask some plain christian man or woman, what they understand by them? I am not afraid that they will understand me perfectly: I will abide their decision.

And now, reader, if you assent to all the above propositions, in their plain common sense meaning, without explanation, without equivocation,—without the least shadow of a doubt, then come along; and we shall venture to move into the thorny thickets of philosophical argument; into thickets where travellers have often been lost; into jungles, where the lion and the tyger, and all beasts of prey, nurse in darkness their merciless broods. But if you have any doubt respecting the universal truth of all the above propositions, then I beseech you follow me no farther. Let me leave you safe in your Bible, searching with prayer for the principles of your faith. You are not prepared, indeed you are not prepared to attempt the difficulties of abstract argumentation on subjects of theology. You have neither chart nor compass; you have no means of ascertaining the fixed and immutable laws of those worlds, which roll through

the ethereal space; and all must soon become with you confusion and disorder and doubt. Stay behind. I might possibly do you much harm; you cannot possibly do me any good. The very thought of such a companion would overwhelm me with dismay.

We are strangely liable to err, partly from the difficulty of fixing first principles, more from that laziness of mind, which prompts to jumping conclusions; pride of opinion will not allow us to suppose, that ever we were or can be wrong; language has its ambiguities, temper has its petulancies, the pride of sect and the honour of famous leaders bias the mind insensibly but irresistibly; while a dark satanic influence frequently holds all our faculties in abeyance. Yet man may say, the spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life; he hath kindled up within me a lamp, which need not be eternally obscured; he has promised to give me wisdom, and I will know his truth.

CHAPTER VII.

EIGHT ARGUMENTS, FOUNDED ON SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES, TO PROVE THAT THE ATONEMENT, OR RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST IS CAPABLE OF SAVING ALL MEN—AND THREE ARGUMENTS FOUNDED ON SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES, TO PROVE THAT IF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST IS NOT CAPABLE OF SAVING ALL MEN, THE GOSPEL CANNOT BE PREACHED TO ANY MAN.

ARGUMENT I.

1. GOD offers eternal life in Jesus Christ to all who hear the gospel.

2. But it would be inconsistent with all the moral perfections of God, to offer men eternal life in Jesus Christ, if there is no salvation in him for them.

3. Therefore there is in Jesus Christ eternal life for all those to whom it is offered in the gospel, that is for all those who hear the gospel.

The first of these propositions is one of the general doctrines, which I have so laboriously and copiously proved from the Holy Scriptures: and I will not disgrace so glorious a truth by supposing that it needs any farther proof or elucidation.

The second proposition we shall demonstrate. If there be not salvation in Christ for all who hear the gospel; then for some of them there is no salvation;

and of consequence when God offers to these salvation by Jesus Christ, he offers them what does not exist. He offers them an empty purse, and bids them take it, and they shall be rich. He sets an empty plate before them, and bids them eat, and they shall be filled. He leads them dying with thirst to the rock, he bids them drink and be satisfied, but he produces no water. There is nothing moral, there is every thing immoral, in such conduct. It is not true, that if they accept an empty purse, they will be rich; that if they accept an empty plate, they will be filled; that if they drink up a dry rock, they will find their thirst quenched. There is no mercy in this; it is a most cruel mockery of human misery. There is no bounty in it; for where is the bounty of offering nothing! There is no justice in it, for to make a law, or do an act, which aggravates distress, without the possibility of doing any compensating good, is injustice, and the very essence of tyranny.

Is it any sin or indecency, to treat with contempt and indignation, a theory which represents Almighty God in so contemptible and unworthy a character? Reader, you are a great philanthropist I am told. You went out and found a poor exhausted traveller, he had fallen through exhaustion in the snow, and was just closing his eyes in the slumbers of death. You waked him up, you invited him to your house, promising him plentiful entertainment; he summons up the last energies of expiring nature, and follows you; you place him at the cold end of your table, you help all your family, and all your friends abundantly, with the richest viands. Yet placed an empty plate before the traveller, and bade him eat; you

placed an empty tumbler before him, and bade him drink. Nature could bear no more. The last tear stands in his eye; and why, he says, could you not have left me to die alone? why was I aroused by the voice of mercy, only to find that there is no mercy on earth? His heart bursted at the thought, and he fell dead. Reader, is this tale true? I hear you indignantly exclaim—No! It is a vile slander, I never acted so; I am incapable of acting such a part! Reader, I thought as much myself, when I heard the tale. How dare you then give to my God a moral character which you think too base for yourself!

You have then your choice, either that there is salvation in Jesus Christ, for all to whom God offers it; or to put up with the conclusion that God is destitute of moral perfections. The latter cannot be admitted; therefore the former must. *q. e. d.*

Argument II.

1. God by a public law, has commanded all men to whom that law becomes known, to believe in Jesus for salvation; promising to each, and all of them, eternal life in case they obey that commandment; and threatening death to each and all of them, in case they disobey.

2. But it would be inconsistent will all the moral perfections of God to command men to believe in Jesus for salvation, if Jesus could not save them; to promise to give them life if they believed in Jesus, if there is no life for them in Jesus; and to punish them for rejecting salvation in Christ, if all the while there is no salvation to reject.

3. Therefore, there is salvation in Jesus Christ for all those who are commanded to believe in him; that is, for all who hear the gospel.

The first of these propositions is one of my established first principles.

The second proposition I demonstrate thus. If men are commanded to believe in Jesus, they are commanded to believe that he is able to save them; for to believe that he is not able to save them, is what the Scriptures call unbelief. Now if any persons are commanded to believe that Jesus is able to save them, whom yet he is not able to save, such persons are commanded to believe a falsehood, which is inconsistent with the truth and all the moral perfections of God. Jesus Christ, according to the hypothesis of some, is not able to save certain persons who hear the gospel; such persons do not believe he is able to save them, and that is believing the truth; and therefore they do not trust their salvation to one whom they do not think able to save them, and who according to this hypothesis is not able to save them, which is acting the part that every rational creature ought to act. Now if God damns any such persons for not believing in Jesus Christ, he damns them for believing the truth, and for acting as rational creatures ought to act. Which is injustice and tyranny in their worst shapes.

You have then your choice, either that there is salvation in Jesus for all who hear the gospel, that is, that he is able to save them all; or that God is destitute of moral attributes. The latter supposition is false, therefore, the former must be true. *q. e. d.*

But there is other ground on which I mean to argue these same doctrines, and to carry out conclusions

from them in different directions. It is the glory of man that God made him in his own image. This intellectual moral being is laid off from the grandest scale. He who is not impressed with an indescribable sense of the majesty of his nature, should give up all attempts at moral speculation, or indeed at any sort of speculation; and equally may he despair of ever attaining to any thing elevated in action or conduct. And he that would assert for himself any dignity, honour, or glory, without ascribing the whole glory to the author of his being; and who does not forget and lose himself, whatever he may be, in the glory of Jehovah his maker, has no just view or conception of things divine or human.

Now it is a fact, that all we can know of the intelligence of God, must be collected by reflection on our own intellectual operations; and all that we can know of his moral attributes and operations, must be learned by reflecting on ourselves. We must leave out every imperfection which we find in ourselves, we must imagine every excellence exalted to its utmost degree, in order to form a suitable conception of the Supreme Being. It is in the image of God displayed in man—in ourselves—that we must study the original—the uncreated infinite God. Thus by a necessity of our nature, a necessity against which it were vain to attempt resistance, we are compelled to believe that what is moral law between man and man, is also under similar relations moral law between God and man. Thus we are obliged to believe that promises, oaths, and covenants bind him; that his justice, is the justice of a being infinitely merciful; and his mercy, the mercy of a being infinitely just. This mode of reasoning in respect to God, the Scrip-

tures teach us to employ; and exemplify its use in a thousand instances. We, therefore, have full confidence in the soundness of the argumentation above offered. Yet we chuse to remove the debate to ground, which, though not firmer than that which has been occupied, is more level to our capacities.

Our feeble nature, it must be confessed, often finds itself overpowered and oppressed, when it attempts to apply the principle of investigation mentioned to particular instances. God is infinite, and there are no doubt an infinite variety of moral relations; and though we are always sure that what God has done must be right, yet when we put an hypothetical case, and ask ourselves how God would act in such a case, we are hardly ever, indeed I believe we are never, able to give a decisive answer, unless we can produce either some declaration, or some action, of his own, which may serve as a rule, or a precedent, to determine our judgment.

But if this august and infinite being, should expressly put himself under the law of our nature, so that we might be entitled to judge his actions, by the same rule according to which we judge of our own; it would certainly contribute greatly to relieve our minds from embarrassment. We could then determine absolutely what conduct would, and what conduct would not become the Almighty, with as much certainty and facility, as we can decide similar questions in relation to ourselves. Happily for man, the case supposed is not hypothetical but real. The son of God has actually appeared in human nature, and put himself under our law. In his conduct, therefore, we can contemplate the moral perfections of deity displayed under the moral law of man. In

his actions nothing could possibly occur, unworthy of God, for he was God: and nothing could occur contrary to the law of human nature, for he was a subject of that law. Now as Jesus Christ is the moral sovereign of the world, as he is the great agent in the administration of the gospel; as all its gracious offers and promises, all its authoritative commands, and its tremendous sanction of threatened death, flow from his own lips; we are entitled to judge of his conduct in the whole, by the common law which regulates the duties, and bounds the virtues, and defines the transgressions of mankind at large. This is the best ground in the universe for deciding the grand subject of debate. We shall accordingly take up the whole subject anew, retaining our eight general principles of faith stated at the end of the foregoing chapter.

Argument III.

1. Jesus Christ offers eternal salvation to all who hear his gospel.

2. But it is a violation of the law of God, which Jesus Christ perfectly obeyed, for a man to offer as a gift that which does not belong to him; God hates robbery for a burnt-offering.

3. Therefore, Jesus Christ is able to bestow eternal salvation on all who hear his gospel.

The first proposition has already been demonstrated. As to the second, it will not be denied. It seems to me to be self-evident. If it is not self-evident, it is at least one of those moral truths which are so familiar to our minds, that we never think of proving them; and when at any time we begin to search for proof, we can find nothing more certain or satisfac-

tory than themselves. There is certainly no justice in offering to bestow what does not belong to one. There is certainly no mercy in promising salvation, if he has not the power of giving it. There is certainly no fair plain magnanimous dealing, no honour nor honesty, in offering to save those whom he is not able to save. Either then Jesus Christ is able to bestow salvation on all to whom he offers it—or the offer is an immoral act, a violation of the law; and Jesus Christ has no righteousness to bestow, but is himself a sinner. If this latter supposition be false, the former must be true. *q.e.d.*

Argument IV.

1. Jesus Christ commands all who hear the gospel to trust in him for salvation, promising, that if they trust in him, they shall be saved; but threatening to punish all who do not trust in him, with dreadful torments for their sin in rejecting him.

2. But it is contrary to the law which Jesus Christ was bound to obey, to command men to trust in him for salvation, if he is unable to give them salvation; to promise salvation to them, on condition that they obey him, if he has no salvation to bestow: and to punish them for not taking what he has not to give.

3. Therefore Jesus Christ is able to confer salvation upon all those whom he commands to receive it—that is, upon all who hear the gospel.

The first proposition is of undoubted authority. The second shines with intuitive evidence. What governor has a moral right to command his subjects to believe that he can do, that which he himself knows he cannot do? What moral governor has a right to

promise, on a specified condition, to give his subjects privileges, which, on no possible condition, he could confer? What moral governor would condemn and torture his subjects for not believing him capable of doing for them, that which he knows himself he is incapable of performing? Would it savor of insolence, if I were to tell the man who hesitates a moment about answering such questions, that I sincerely pity him. There is something unhappily wrong in his modes of thinking. He is really spoiled through false philosophy.

Either then Jesus is able to bestow salvation on all whom he commands to accept it—or he has violated the law of God in giving the command; and, of consequence, has no righteousness to boast, nor any salvation to bestow on any one. The latter supposition is false; therefore, the former must be true. *q. e. d.*

I have thus given four demonstrations of the same proposition; two drawn from the known perfections of Deity; and two derived from the law under which Jesus acted. I therefore assume this proposition as ascertained, demonstrated, and undoubted: I consequently take it into my elements; and, in future, hold myself entitled to reason from it.

Argument V.

1. Jesus Christ is able to save all to whom his gospel is preached.

2. But the gospel has been preached to many who have not believed, and are not saved; and, therefore, were not elected.

3. Therefore Jesus Christ is able to save persons who were not elected, and are not saved.

4. Therefore the imputability of Christ's righteousness, that is, its capacity of procuring salvation, does not depend in any manner, nor in any degree, upon the electing decree of the Father, nor on the covenant relation, established between him and the promised travail of his soul from all eternity; for if its imputability depends upon his relation to the elect, it would be incapable of being imputed to any who are not elected, but it is capable of being imputed to those who are not elected.

5. Therefore the righteousness of Jesus Christ, in its penal part, does not consist of an amount of suffering, exactly proportioned to the guilt of the elect, and consequently capable of saving them, but incapable of saving any others; for it has been demonstrated, that the righteousness of Jesus is capable of saving some who are not saved, and, therefore, were not elected. *q. e. d.*

I take it for granted, that my reader is getting familiar with my principles and modes of reasoning—and, therefore, I begin to move more rapidly, and shall continue to do so.

Argument VI.

1. Jesus Christ has authorised the preaching of his gospel to all mankind; and, in consequence, has authorised the offer of salvation to all men, and the command to all to receive it.

2. But it would be immoral, and a breach of the divine law, for Jesus Christ to authorise the offer of salvation to those to whom he is unable to give salvation; and to threaten to damn those for rejecting his salvation, on whom he has no salvation to bestow.

3. Therefore Jesus Christ is capable of saving all mankind.

All the reasonings which have been used in the illustration of the I. II. III. IV. Arguments, apply here. I shall not repeat them. To allege that the ability of Jesus to save all men cannot be inferred from the universality of the gospel call, because the gospel has not been preached to all men, is a mere verbal evasion of the argument. It is a quick involuntary wink against a dazzling truth. It is only a flourish of his sword, while the champion is wheeling to decline the charge. I cannot permit such evasion: I must cut off that retreat. I shall admit that the gospel has not yet been preached to all men; I shall suppose that it never has been preached to any man: to prevent any misunderstanding, I shall go back to the time intervening between the date of the apostolic commission, and the time of its first execution, while the apostles remained together at Jerusalem engaged in prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, to qualify them for preaching the gospel to every creature. During this time they were authorised to preach the gospel so soon as they should receive power from on high. Now every act which the Son of God has authorised, is a lawful act; for, as a subject of the law, he had no right to authorise any thing contrary to the law. It would, therefore, be a moral act to preach the gospel to every creature; and since the apostles were absolutely commanded to preach to all, it was their duty to preach to all without exception. Suppose now this authorized act performed, and that the gospel were actually preached to all mankind; it would follow, from all the foregoing

arguments, that Jesus Christ is able to give salvation to them all.

Those who limit the imputability of Christ's righteousness to the elect alone, really gain nothing by alleging that the gospel never has been preached to all men. The question is, has it ever been preached to any who were not elected? The answer is easy: it has been preached to persons who rejected it and are lost, and who therefore were not elected. We have demonstrated that Jesus Christ was able to grant salvation to all those unelected persons to whom he offered it, which completely cuts the throat of the whole system. If only one such instance can be proved against them, their system is entirely annihilated!

And now as I have demonstrated that Jesus Christ is able to save all mankind, I shall take this principle also into my elements, as a basis of argumentation.

Argument VII.

1. Jesus Christ is able to save all mankind.

2. But his ability to save all mankind depends on this, that the merit of his righteousness is adequate to the salvation of all.

3. Therefore the righteousness of Jesus is of universal merit, and capable of securing the salvation of all mankind.

The first proposition I have demonstrated in the foregoing arguments. The second proposition needs no proof. No body interested in this discussion will question it. In fact the whole doctrine of salvation taught in the Bible, rests on this principle, that "in him have we redemption in his blood;" that it is by his

blood that he takes away sin and purges the conscience.

Therefore there is merit enough in the blood, the atonement, the satisfaction, the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ to save all mankind. *q. e. d.*

Why then are any of mankind lost?

For one grand reason, which branches into two heads.

1. Some of them are ignorant of this salvation, and perish in their sins because they do not know, and therefore do not apply the remedy.

2. Some of them perish because, though they have this salvation taught them, they trample the precious blood of Christ under their feet. They perish in their sins, and particularly are they destroyed by this sin, that they trampled his precious blood under their feet. If it had not been precious blood, if it had not been blood capable of saving them, there would have been no sin in trampling it under foot. If it had not been capable of saving them, they ought to trample it under foot, that is, they ought not to expect salvation by it. A stone is not bread, a serpent is not a fish, I cannot eat either, and I will not accept them for food: I ought not. The scriptural doctrine is that the sinner perishes, not because there is not merit in the blood of Christ to save him, but because he is either ignorant of that blood, or knowing its value rejects it. How can we read our Bibles and not see this. But as to the peculiar property of the remedial system, which suspends the enjoyment of the benefit upon the acceptance of the party, that is a subject worthy of separate discussion, and shall receive it.

Argument VIII.

1. The sin of Adam, was a violation of the law of works, and entails the penalty of death on every human being who comes under that law.

2. The mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ is the righteousness of that law in its violated state—and we have demonstrated that it is capable of saving all who shall ever come under the condemning power of the law.

3. Therefore the remedial righteousness of Jesus Christ, has the same extent, bounds and limits with the covenant transgression of Adam; the latter has destroyed all mankind, the former is capable of saving all mankind.

And therefore the remedial law of grace is complete and perfect; the remedy provided by Christ's obedience to the law, covers the whole extent of the evil produced by man's transgression.

But I shall treat of the coincidence and of the difference, between the original law and the remedial law, in a separate chapter; as very great injury has been done to the purity of the gospel, through the want of a clear perception of these two points, by various theoretical writers, in different nations and ages.

I now very respectfully submit this chapter to the most rigorous examination of the reasoning class of society. I believe it to consist of as sound and irrefragable moral demonstration, as any thing in Euclid's Elements displays of mathematical demonstration; and therefore I have added to each argument, the proud but necessary phrase, *quod erat demonstrandum.* And I as much expect to see a mathematician arise.

who shall prove all Euclid's demonstrations to be pure sophistry; as I expect to see a theologian who shall demolish the demonstrations above exhibited. This declaration certainly springs from no partial or overweening opinion which I may, or for any thing the reader knows, may not entertain of my own ingenuity; but solely from the perfect assurance which I feel, that truth of all kinds is immutable; and that it is out of the power of all created beings (the reader may if he pleases make the proposition absolutely general) to set aside, overturn, or destroy any truth of any kind.

In fact there is no medium between preaching the gospel to all, and the ability of Jesus to save all. And as a medium between the two has been very industriously sought after; some even at the present moment are out on that vain pursuit; I shall not be thought to engage in a work of supererogation, if I subjoin a few demonstrations, to show them whither their principle will lead them.

Let me assume their fundamental principle, that the merit of Christ's obedience and sacrifice, or the merit of his righteousness, is exactly proportioned to the demerit of the elect, so that he is able to save them, but totally unable to save any of the unelected; and then I argue thus.

Argument I.

1. Jesus Christ is not able to grant salvation to the unelected.

2. It would be immoral in him to offer salvation to those on whom he cannot bestow it; or to command them to take it.

3. Therefore salvation is not offered to the unelected.

Argument II.

1. It cannot be a duty to believe what is not true, to accept what is not offered, or to do what is not commanded.

2. But Jesus Christ is not able to save the unelected; and therefore as he is just, he does not offer salvation to them, nor command them to accept it.

3. Therefore faith is not the duty, nor can unbelief be the sin, of unelected persons.

Argument III.

1. The gospel minister ought not to offer, and cannot offer, salvation in Christ's name, to those whom Christ is not able to save; nor ought he, nor can he, command those to trust in Christ for salvation, whom he is unable to save.

2. And since the gospel minister is entirely ignorant whether any of the sinners who are before him be elected, and therefore is ignorant whether Jesus Christ be able to save any of them, it follows that he cannot assure any of them, that Jesus is able to save him.

3. Therefore the gospel minister cannot invite any sinner to come to Jesus for salvation, he cannot command any sinner to come to Jesus; he cannot enforce faith as a duty, he cannot charge unbelief as a sin, upon any unconverted person.

What conclusions! What tremendous conclusions! Yet assuredly they are not the figments of my fancy: they have been drawn by others, whose names I will

tell you before I have done; and they have been represented as the only pure unadulterated gospel of salvation. And I will do these theorists the justice to say, that they are sound and irrefragable logicians. If their first principle be granted, their argument is invulnerable. But their conclusions give the lie direct to God, and to his Christ, and to all the prophets, and to all the apostles. And therefore they ought to have added to each conclusion, *quod absurdum est;* and to infer the falsehood of the assumption from which such conclusions flow.

But reader perhaps thou art no great clerk, no trained logician; but one of Christ little ones, a babe who desires earnestly the sincere milk of the word, that thou mayest grow thereby. Then I shall leave this chapter with the logicians; the next chapter shall be thy own; in which I shall prove from the pure and simple declaration of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scripture, every position which in the present chapter has been proved by argument.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS OF JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE ALL WHO HEAR HIS GOSPEL, PROVED BY THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Matth. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

This is the testimony of Jesus Christ himself; and how any can read it without admitting that Jesus was willing to save all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, I never shall be able to know. "I would"—"and ye would not." The reader of the original text beholds the most marked contrast of terms, which any language admits of ηθελησα—και ουχ ηθελεσατε—*I was willing, and you were not willing.*

By what mysterious, unheard of operation of metaphysical acumen, by what process of verbal criticism, will any man interpret this text, without saying that Jesus was willing to save all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; "How often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Suppose that Jesus was unwilling to save some of them; then he and they were perfectly of one mind. He was unwilling to

save them, and they were unwilling to be saved by him. Had this been the case, then I ask what sort of moral feelings must Jesus have had? Dwelt there in his bosom the heart of a man? His words convey the deepest possible pathos, a feeling which shakes and convulses my whole soul: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! I ask you, was this true moral pathos, sincere honest lamentation from true and unfeigned sorrow—or was it not? I can say no more, I ought to say no more! If there be truth in words, if there be sincerity in sorrow, if there were in Jesus the attributes of God, or even the attributes of an honest man, he was willing to save the children, all the children, of Jerusalem; how often was he willing!

It will not be pretended, that they all were elected; the great mass of them were lost: "Behold," says he, "your house is left unto you desolate." We know from the inspired history, what a desperate race of men that city at that time contained; we know the unparalleled length of infidelity, and cruel wickedness into which they plunged; we know in what impious blasphemies they perished, under the most awful judgments of Almighty God. And yet we know that Jesus was willing to save them. Why then were they not saved—Because they would not! This is Christ's solution of the matter.

I assert then that Jesus was willing to save all the Jews; and his willingness was declared every time he sent his prophets, or his apostles, to preach salvation to them, and every time he preached it

himself.—He is therefore willing to save many who are not saved, and were not elected.—By the same mode of reasoning I prove him willing to save all who hear his gospel—and since he has authorised the preaching of his gospel to all mankind, I prove from this fact his willingness to save all mankind. And he who cannot infer Christ's ability, from his willingness, to save; must content himself with such absurdities as this, that the son of God our Saviour, was willing to do more than he was able. Benevolence beyond the extent of power, is indeed an amiable virtue in man, whose power is so very limited. But it must be remembered, that a question of moral right is involved in this subject. If Christ's sacrifice gave him a moral right to bestow salvation only on the elect, and if he was willing to bestow it on others, then he was willing to bestow salvation on those to whom he had no moral right to bestow it; which sets his inclinations at war with his moral obligations. But I forget myself; my present business is not with moral argument, but with Scripture testimony.

I have proved by his own testimony that Jesus was willing to save all the Jews; many of whom were not saved, and therefore, had not been elected to salvation. And now I shall prove by direct scriptural testimony that God is willing that all mankind should be saved; and has made that willingness the basis on which he has enjoined some of the most holy and important duties which man owes to man.

1 Tim. ii. 1—7. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: for this is

good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the gentiles in faith and verity."

From this portion of Scripture we collect the following plain and undeniable truths.

1. That christians both in their individual capacity, and when gathered together as a social body to worship their God, are bound to offer up prayers, supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings; are bound to offer up all sorts of prayer, and every thing which can be called prayer, for all mankind without exception. Lest the primitive christians should imagine that kings and potentates, who were at that time heathens, and most of them enemies, oppressors, and persecutors of the christian church, were not fit objects of prayer; they are expressly commanded to pray for all such, with all prayer and supplication. In the same manner did our Lord command his disciples: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."* Thus have our Lord and his inspired apostles brought by name under the law of charity, prayer, and beneficence, the only persons whom a christian was in any danger of excepting, the wicked persecutors of religion and religious men. The objects of our prayers therefore are all mankind, friends,

* Mat. v. 44.

and enemies, magistrates and subjects; professors of the true religion, and professors of false religions, and foes to all religion; the whole mass of humanity. It needs no proof that we are to pray for the salvation of all; for the pardon of their sins, for the sanctification of their persons, for their eternal happiness through Jesus Christ. Such are the prayers which the context contemplates; and prayers which should exclude these blessings would be an abomination to the Lord.

2. We are to pray for all men, "BECAUSE this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour," that all his disciples should pray not only for themselves, and for each other; but for all their brethren of the human family.

3. And to hear prayers for all men is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, BECAUSE he is willing and desirous that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth—ὁς παντας ανθρωπους θελει σωθηναι, και εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας ελθειν.

4. All this is exactly suitable to Christ's character, as mediator between God and men. A mediator is not a mediator of one, but a mediator between two parties; so Jesus is mediator between God on the one hand, and mankind on the other.

5. And Jesus Christ being a mediator between God and mankind, gave himself a ransom for them all.

And, therefore, as Jesus Christ is mediator between God and men; and in that character has given himself a ransom for all; which ransom God has accepted, and loosed the mediator from the bonds of death, giving him a free acquittal and discharge in his resurrection: so is he most willing that all mankind should

accept his ransom, as he hath accepted it; that so peace and friendship may be established between both parties, and the mediator crowned with the highest glory. Therefore he commands all his saints to pray for all mankind.

Such a chain of argument, put together by the hands of the divine spirit, is of infinite worth. It may be compared to Jacob's ladder, one foot is on the earth, the other in heaven. You may begin at the lower steps, and walk up to the highest; you may then turn and come down again to the earth, with a tread as light and as sure as that of an arch-angel. I am commanded to pray for all men; therefore Jesus Christ is well pleased with such prayers; because he is willing that all men should be saved—Jesus Christ is willing that all men should be saved; because he is mediator between God and mankind—and, having given himself a ransom for all, with which God is satisfied, he must be willing that all men should be equally satisfied with his work, and accept his salvation. I am now up in the high and holy heavens, where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of his Father, and can step down by the way whereby I ascended. Thus—Jesus Christ is mediator between God and mankind, and has paid a ransom for them all which his father has accepted; he is, therefore, willing that they all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth—and, because he is willing that all should be saved, he has commanded his apostles to preach the gospel to them all; and his saints to pray always for them all, with all prayer and supplication.

Thus does the Holy Ghost, in the most definite and unequivocal terms which language possesses, assert the willingness of Jesus to save all mankind; thus

does the Holy Ghost found the willingness of Jesus to save all mankind, upon his mediatorial character, and the ransom which he has paid for all; thus does he bottom the only universal duty which a man can perform to all mankind, namely prayer, upon the willingness and ability of Jesus to save all.

I would here be done with the interpretation of this passage of scripture, did I not know what, and how great men they are, who have advanced the notion, that by praying for ALL MEN, the apostle means no more than praying for all SORTS of men. It ever will be a true and sound maxim in morals, that where the great and the wise are not able to convince us by their arguments, we should not permit ourselves to be daunted by their authority. I will not dispute about words, or impute an unsound sense to a phrase, which admits a very sound interpretation. I must be excused, however, if I prefer the apostle's phrase ALL men, to the substituted phrase ALL SORTS OF MEN, or ALL CLASSES OF MEN. Because, to speak plainly, I think the term SORTS or CLASSES in this instance, is a word placed half way between two ideas, and not appropriated to either of them—like Mahommed's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth, by equal and opposite attractions.

Let us then examine what this new term really means. When you say that we ought to pray for all CLASSES of men, what do you mean? One of two things you must mean. 1. That we should pray for all *classes*, by praying for all the individuals which compose these classes. Or, 2. That we ought to pray for all *classes* of men, so as not to pray for all the individuals who compose these classes!

The first of these interpretations gives us good sense, and sound theology; but, then it brings us back to the apostle's phrase, pray for ALL MEN. It introduces no new idea, it casts no light on any obscurity, it solves no difficulty. But still, it is not a harmless piece of verbage. It suggests to us the false notion, that there is some difficulty in the apostle's expressions; and excites doubt whether it be our duty to pray for all men, and whether Jesus is willing to save all, or whether his ransom is adequate to the salvation of all. Now, all such doubts are injurious to the truth, and hostile to the glory of our Redeemer, and dangerous to the souls of men.

Let us, therefore, demonstrate that we must pray for every *individual* of Adam's family; even though we should adopt this useless and dangerous phrase.

If I must pray for the *class* of men called kings, then, since the whole includes all its parts, I must pray for every individual king: if I pray for the *class* of men called Jews, then, since the whole includes all its parts, I must pray for every Jew: and, for the same reason, if I pray for the *class* of gentiles, I must pray for every gentile: if I pray for the *class* of my friends, I must pray for every friend: if I pray for the *class* of my enemies, I must pray for every enemy: and, consequently, if I must pray for all the classes of mankind, I must pray for every individual of all those classes—which is praying for all MEN!

There is no subtlety here at all: the ideas are as well defined as any in mathematics, and the demonstration as infallibly correct. What, I pray you, is the meaning of praying for a *class* without praying for the individuals of the class! If it does not mean praying for all the individuals of the class—let it mean praying for *some* of each class. The apostle's argu-

ment will then run thus: Pray for *some* men of every class; for Jesus Christ is willing that *some* of every class should be saved; he is mediator between God and *some* men of every class; and has given himself a ransom for *some* men of all those classes! Is this interpreting the Scriptures?—No! it is not, but it is making a new Bible.

But take this new Bible, and let us see what a rule of practical duty it prescribes to us, and by what means we shall be able to comply with that rule.

Since by hypothesis, I must not pray for all men, and since it is a fact, that I cannot possibly know any reason why I should pray for one more than another; it follows that I cannot pray for any individual of them intentionally and by name. A man, it seems, may pray for wives in general, but not for his own wife; for little children, but not for his own little children; for kings, and all who are in authority, but not for the magistrates of his country; the gospel minister may pray for sinners, but not definitely for the sinners of his own flock—no, nor for the dying sinner, by whose agonizing bed he kneels. And no sinner can possibly pray for himself. And this is the interpretation which we must affix to the words of inspiration, "I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." μη γενοιτο!

Thus the spirit of prayer must become mute. The eternal purposes, the inscrutable purposes of God, which he will permit neither angel in heaven, nor man on earth to inspect, are to be made the rule of our duty, instead of the law of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayers for mankind must dwindle into an idle battology, *Lord save the elect—Lord save the elect!* But no

one must say "Lord be merciful to me a sinner;" "O that Ishmael might live before thee;" "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

Before I drop this subject, it is proper to remark that there is but one single limitation of the duty of prayer; which we shall mention, least an advantage should be taken from the omission. 1 John v. 16, 17. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that ye shall pray for it." And having mentioned that sin, it is no more than justice to afflicted consciences, to exhibit the scriptures which show us wherein that sin consists, and which state the moral reasons, why it, and it alone, is excluded from the mercy of God.

Mat. xii. 31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy, shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Mark and Luke record the same commination.

Heb. vi. 4. "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Heb. x. 26. 29. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace?"

I do not mean to enter into a formal discussion of this subject, nor to agitate questions which divide sects and parties; but simply to make a few remarks on the general nature of this unpardonable sin, as it is distinguished from all other human transgressions.

1. It seems this sin can take place only under the gospel dispensation, when the full unction of the Holy Ghost is bestowed on men. All manner of sins and blasphemies against God, and even against his Christ, which arise even from culpable ignorance, may obtain pardon.

2. The person who commits this sin must personally "have received the knowledge of the truth;" must have been "enlightened" by the spirit of God, and been perfectly persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; and that there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved. This sinner must have been a partaker of the Holy Ghost in his full illuminating operations; and must have tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come.

3. With all these convictions and feelings, he must wilfully trample Jesus under his feet; must treat him as an impostor; must despise him, hate him, publickly blaspheme him, and put him to open shame; and must do all this in direct despite of the spirit of grace, whose operations on his mind, convince him still that Jesus is the Christ.

To such hellish, wilful guilt, God refuses pardon; and the sinner as obstinately refuses to ask pardon; or perhaps we ought to arrange our ideas thus: because this sinner knowingly, wilfully and purposely tramples under foot that which he knows to be salvation; and voluntarily chooses to make himself the avowed and implacable enemy of the Saviour; God takes him at his word, and leaves him to meet the doom which he has voluntarily and knowingly chosen for himself.

All such sinners know *themselves;* they must be conscious of their condition, beyond a doubt; they must glory in their condition; the highest glory of their heart is that they would rather be damned than ask salvation from the Son of God. Fearfully do they look forward to future judgment and fiery indignation; but like the devil, they hate Jesus so thoroughly that they would rather be in hell, than with him giving him glory in heaven. As God, the most merciful, and the most just, has decided to leave that species of sinners to their fate, we may safely acquiesce in the decision. And though the subject seems to overpower the human faculties, we must say that our best moral judgment decides that such sinners ought to be struck off the list of mercy.

But mark the consequence, the moment God seals the fountain of mercy, he seals up the lips of prayer.

Let them alone—I do not command you to pray for such!

And from this very exception to the general rule of prayer, I draw an argument in defence of that rule. If when God declares the exercise of mercy morally impossible, and incompatible with his attributes; he also commands his saints to pray no more to him on the subject: then on the contrary, when God commands his saints to pray for his mercy to any human being, the exercise of that mercy is morally possible, and compatible with all the divine perfections.

But least Satan should pervert what is here written, as he has often perverted the writings of others on this subject, and even the very texts of inspiration which have been quoted, I would add as of undoubted truth, and verity,

That no person who sorrows for sin, has committed the unpardonable transgression. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

No person who esteems Jesus a precious Saviour, has committed the unpardonable sin: for "to them who believe he is precious."

No person who desires to come to Jesus has committed this sin.

No person who loves the saints, the servants of Jesus, has committed this sin; for "love is of God," "he that loveth is born of God."

No person who loves and endeavours to keep any of Christ's commandments, has committed this sin.

And to say no more, no person who is fearful lest he has committed this sin, no man who wishes that he may not have committed this sin, can possibly be guilty of it.

But on this point I hope enough has been said. The introduction of the subject was necessary to my general argument; and the christian reader will, I am sure, pardon me for having made a small digression, in order to guard tender consciences against an abusive application of an awful truth, by the enemy who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. I have just one text more to produce, in order to finish my scriptural proof of the ability and willingness of God and his Christ to save all men. It has been quoted already, but will bear repetition.

Ezekiel xxxiii. 10—11. "Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; thus ye speak saying, if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live. Say unto them. As I live saith the Lord God I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

An oath for confirmation is an end of strife. And an oath in order to confirm any thing, or to terminate any strife, or matter of doubt, must be taken in the plain sense of the words, as they will be understood by him for whose satisfaction it is taken. We have the solemn oath of Jehovah, that he takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner; we have his solemn oath, that he would rather the sinner should turn and live, than persevere in guilt and die. What else can this mean, than that God is *unwilling* that sinners should be damned; but *most willing* that they should be saved? And what means that earnest pathetic, reiterated exhortation, command and intreaty, "turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die."

I have now proved by three infallible witnesses; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;—that Jesus Christ is able and willing to save all men; and that upon this very fact is founded the obligation of the only duty which we can perform to all mankind, namely the duty of praying for them all· and if this foundation be destroyed the duty must perish with it.

If the Scriptures quoted have been misinterpreted, then let some servant of Jesus Christ, upon whom he has bestowed more wisdom, come forward and detect the error. Let it be shown that the texts can have any other meaning than that which has been given them. But let not the infernal fiend of metaphysics, emerging from the bottom of Erebus and Old Night, croack her endless and unblest ditty, Jesus Christ is not able to save all men! Jesus Christ is not willing to save all men! You must not preach the gospel to all men! You must not pray for all men! Let her not imagine that we shall lay our hand upon our mouth for her. Is the voice of inspiration, and the voice of human reason; are every generous sigh and sob, which bursts from the sympathetic bosom of man, to be suppressed; in order that metaphysics alone may be heard with deferential awe and silence, while she gives the lie direct to our Saviour and our God.

Prayer is the nutriment and life's blood of all the christian graces and virtues. It is the soul's living on the bread and water of life. Without prayer we can do nothing; with it there is nothing which we cannot do. We watch and pray; we work and pray; we fight and pray, and conquer earth and hell. Prayer repairs our wearied strength; supplies our

exhausted patience; dries up our tears; smiles upon death; grasps, anticipates, realises, the glories of the heavenly state. And what has metaphysics to do with prayer? Must the language of all our necessities and wants, be subjected to the hair-splitting ingenuity of cold speculation? Will faith be permitted to retain nothing of her heaven-bestowed inheritance!

I have laboured this point perhaps too minutely, and to too great an extent: but I have a fell and subtle enemy to deal with—false philosophy. And when I call to mind, the cool blooded speculations which I have both read, and heard from the pulpit; some of them denying my right to pray for any but the converted; some limiting my prayers to the elect; and some of them talking I known not really what; but it was something about praying for men in general, without either intending or wishing that my prayers should be literally interpreted, by the hearer of prayer; the recollection of such things, makes me hope, that every humane reader will indulge me in a little overflowing of the spirit; that I may at least attempt "to assert eternal providence and vindicate the ways of God to man."

The subject of prayer is one of the best fields—it is a field selected by the spirit of inspiration—upon which to argue and maintain, the ability and willingness of Jesus Christ to save all mankind. The universality of prayer, is one of the first principles of christianity. There the light of heaven shines in its fullest splendors. We see our duty not by induction, not by inference, but by intuition. We have only to open our eyes and we see it. Nay so strong is the light, that we are unable to shut our

eyes against it. It shines alike to all, with irresistible illumination. The patriarch and the babe; the profound philosopher, and the weakest believer; the scientific investigator, the logical reasoner, and the eloquent orator, are here upon a level with the least instructed of the human family—the common level of fallen humanity. All hear the same God speak, and it is impossible to give any meaning to his words, but the meaning which himself has put into them. The duty of praying for all men, and every individual of them, is a first principle! So far as I am concerned, I will never permit it to be called in question by any speculation. If any question it—I refuse all argument—"to the law and to the testimony." It is in the Bible. Let the critics make the best of it!

Having thus, as I conceive, fully demonstrated that Jesus Christ has made an atonement for sin, of sufficient merit to save all mankind, I shall now proceed to inquire into the means by which any man obtains a personal interest in that atonement, so as actually to be saved by it. It is one undoubted truth, that all mankind might be saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ; it is another undoubted truth, that some men are saved, while other men are not saved by that righteousness. What causeth this difference! Why are the one class saved? and the other class not saved?—since the righteousness of the Son of God is capable of saving them all.

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY THING REQUISITE TO SECURE THE JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE.

I HAVE sufficiently proved already that faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing requisite to salvation; that the gospel is to be preached to every creature; that every man who hears it is authorised and commanded to believe in Jesus for salvation; and that he who believeth shall be saved, while he who believeth not shall be condemned, yea is condemned already, because he hath not believed upon the only begotten son of God. I cannot suppose it necessary to dilate on a doctrine so obviously taught in the Scriptures, that perhaps no one will be found daring enough to deny it in direct terms; though there are speculations abroad, to the establishment of which, the denial of this doctrine is absolutely necessary. What I intend to discuss in this chapter, is an important difference between the law of works and the remedial law of grace, or between the covenant of works in its original form, and in its remedial administration.

The difference is this, that all men are placed under the covenant of works by the immediate authority of God. But to have an interest in the benefits of the remedial law, a man's own personal consent is required.

This distinction between the two covenants has been frequently overlooked, and the oversight has been followed by very pernicious consequences. Instead of noticing these consequences at present, we shall endeavour to illustrate the distinction under consideration.

1. It is obvious that we are all placed under the covenant of works without our knowledge and without our consent. Divine sovereignty has placed us under this law without consulting our will or inclination. We are born under this law; and as it is a broken law, we are born under its curse. We had no agency, no volition, in bringing ourselves into such a state of subjection to the law. In relation to the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, these assertions admit of no dispute; let us examine whether they are not equally true in respect to Adam and Eve themselves.

It is certain that Eve was placed under the covenant of works without asking her consent. The covenant of works was made before she was created; and she was placed under the obligation of the law, by the same authority of God which places her posterity under the same divine law. This cannot be disputed.

In relation to Adam himself, I do not hesitate to affirm, that even he was placed under the law of works by the absolute sovereign authority of God; and that his consent was never asked. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

* Gen. ii. 15, 16, 17.

It is visible that in this transaction, Jehovah appears in the character of a sovereign prescribing his law to his creature. Adam is never once asked whether he is willing or unwilling to comply with this law, covenant, or constitution. The sovereign issues his command,—and the volition of the creature, can only take place subsequent to its obligation. I do therefore assert, that Adam and Eve, and all their posterity, were placed under the law of works, by the absolute sovereignty of God.

Indeed the doctrine advanced is so obvious, that instead of proving it by detailed arguments, I judge it needful to assign my reasons for stating it so formally. Our translation of the Scriptures uses the term covenant in relation to the divine law, in something of an unusual sense; from thence this new application of the term has passed to the pulpit; and thence into the ordinary language of christians. Incidents of this kind are unavoidable; and they certainly expose us to the danger of making mistakes. For instance the English word covenant, means a *contract* or *bargain*; hence some have very incautiously applied all the principles of *contract,* to that institution which we call the covenant of works. Nothing can be more injudicious Every contract implies an absolute *equality of right* in both the contracting parties, to accept or refuse the proposed terms of contract. Where that equality of right does not exist, there cannot possibly be any contract. In forming a contract, or covenant, each party may reject the terms proposed by the other, and bring forward terms of his own. It is no injury to refuse the terms which may be proposed, and to offer other terms; and it is only the mutual agreement of the parties, which can establish a contract and give it moral force and obligation.

There certainly was no such *contract*, or *bargain*, between God and Adam in Paradise. Adam had no right to refuse any terms which his Creator might propose to him; nor had he a right to propose terms to his Creator; it was not his voluntary assent to the covenant, which brought Adam under moral obligation to obey God, on the principle of contracts. Jehovah's moral authority expressed in his command, created man's obligation to obedience. There was no medium between obedience and rebellion. In short, the constitution in question was a law sanctioned with a penalty, but in as much as a promise was annexed, the constitution partook of the nature of a contract. Man's duty to obey arose not from contract, but from the moral obligation which subjects the creature to the law of the Creator; while God's obligation to confer eternal life, depended upon the principle of *contract;* having promised his creature a reward for his obedience, the obedience, when produced, would have entitled the creature to demand his reward as a matter of simple justice. I hope there is nothing in this dark or disputable.

The law of grace—the covenant of grace—the remedial law—or the remedial administration of the covenant of works—for by all these names I call it, to break verbal associations, and to fix the mind of the reader upon the institute itself, and not on technical names.—This law has this peculiarity; that all its subjects are voluntary subjects; their consent is asked, and is obtained!—and it is that consent, that voluntary consent, upon which I propose to offer a few observations.

1. In the first place, the Remedial Chief, the Mediator between God and man, acted a voluntary part in

placing himself under the broken law. This position will be granted, I hope, by all my readers. If any should wish for illustration; I refer them to what I have said on Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8; and in several other parts of the present work. Even the assumption of human nature, did not of itself, bring the Son of God under the obligation of the covenant of works. Moral obligation attaches only to a moral person. And the Son of God in human nature was a moral person subject to no law. He was the essential fountain of all law and legislation. It was his own voluntary act which placed him under the law; "He humbled himself, and became obedient."

2. All who enjoy the benefits of Christ's obedience to the law, enjoy them in consequence of *their own* voluntary assent. So long as they disapprove of his mediation, they remain under the curse of the broken law; so soon as they voluntarily trust in that mediation, they obtain pardon, peace, and eternal life. Thus runs the promise, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Thus runs the preached gospel, "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And thus runs the response of faith, "Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." In fact, all the institutions of the gospel were devised to gain the voluntary consent of mankind to receive the Lord Jesus, and walk in him.

Thus then stands the fact. In the original law, the covenant head, and all the members, were placed under its obligation by the supreme authority of God; their consent was not asked; they must submit to the law which their Creator prescribes. In the remedial law, all the subjects are voluntary agents: the covenant head was voluntary in his undertaking; and all

the members are voluntary in their submission. It is the voluntary consent both of him and them, which gives to each his particular interest in the remedial constitution.

As others have speculated on the principles of moral law, which lie at the bottom of the christian religion, we shall use the same privilege. And the question for our consideration is this: Why, seeing divine sovereignty dictated the original law, is the voluntary consent of the creature required to give him the benefits of the remedial law? I believe that the answer to this question lies within the reach of our faculties.

1. The sinner under the broken law, is a rebel—is guilty of high treason—is dishonouring God! And the end of the remedial system is to provide a remedy against this evil.

2. It is plain, that no person is under any obligation to interpose in behalf of the rebel. It is an act o grace in God to propose a remedial scheme; it is an act of grace in the Son of God, to undertake to make satisfaction for sin.

Supposing the satisfaction to be made; and that God is pleased to accept it: the next question is—on what condition is the sinner to enjoy the benefit?

3. In answer to this question, it may be said that three things are distinctly stated in the Scriptures, as necessary to the sinner's enjoyment of the remedy provided: the three things alluded to are, indeed, intimately connected; and may be all summed up in ONE, which necessarily includes the other two.

1. The sinner must confess his sin.

2. He must plead the righteousness of his Mediator as the ground of his pardon.

3. He must forsake his sin, and return to his duty. Or, these three may all be summed up in FAITH.

Faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, necessarily supposes conviction and confession of sin; and as necessarily implies conversion from sin to righteousness as its effect. Without conviction and confession of sin, faith cannot exist; and faith cannot exist without producing conversion unto righteousness. FAITH in Jesus is an act of confession of sin; faith in Jesus is the *first act* of obedience. Faith in Jesus Christ, therefore, is CONVERSION; it is the sinner's turning from his sins unto God.

The following texts establish the doctrine: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy."* Here confession and conversion are explicitly named, and faith is supposed. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."† Here faith and obedience, professed and displayed by receiving baptism, are expressly mentioned; and conviction of sin is implied.

I say, therefore, that FAITH in Jesus is the sole condition which interests a sinner in Jesus's salvation. "He that believeth shall be saved—he that believeth not shall be damned." So much for the fact; next for its reasons.

1. It is morally impossible, that God should pardon a sinner, who refuses to confess and forsake his sin, and trust in Jesus. There is an incompatibility between the state of such a person, and pardon. From the state of the case it appears, that the rebel deserves punishment, that his sovereign's pardon is offered him, and that he audaciously spurns it, and reiterates, and

* Prov. xxviii. 13. † Mark xvi. 16.

goes on in his rebellion. It is impossible to pardon such a rebel. What would you mean, if you were to say that God pardons such a sinner; that is, that God pardons an unbeliever. You mean that God declares the sinner acquitted from punishment, though he has rebelled, is going on in his rebellion, and is hatching new rebellions. What is this! It is the abolition of moral law and moral government. It is turning wickedness loose in the world, without even the intimidation of a threat. It is telling sinners that God will not punish sin; and that, consequently, they have nothing to fear. As one not long since removed from the lower to the upper sanctuary, used to express it, "The sinner has set aside the precept of the divine law, God sets aside the penalty, and thus the whole law is abolished, and moral government ceases."

2. If you were to suppose pardon pronounced this moment upon the persevering rebel, and yet the law to continue in force.—Then I say the pardon would be as useless, as it is morally absurd! For the next moment the offender would be condemned; and thus we would have an eternal alternation of pardon and rebellion, while moral righteousness made not the slightest advance in the world.

In all pardons granted by magistratical authority; a return to duty is an essential condition. To proclaim pardon to rebels with arms in their hands, upon any other terms than that they throw down their arms, and return to their duty; would be, not the act of a dignified government, which conscious of its own irresistible powers, feels that it can safely mingle mercy with judgment; but the last feeble accents of expiring authority, declaring its own eternal dissolution.

There is, therefore, a moral reason, a sound moral reason, and a reason within the reach of the human understanding, why the benefits of Christ's redemption should be suspended on the faith of the sinner. I conceive I have stated that reason; but as some of my readers cannot possibly be philosophers, and as none of them are bound in conscience by the divine law, to become philosophers, I do not insist that any of them shall be obliged to adopt these reasonings.

But I do, and shall, insist that they all shall believe that the efficacy of Christ's redemption depends upon the faith of gospel hearers.

That the sinner whether elected or not, so long as he continues under the power of unbelief, is under the original broken law, and under its curse, in a state of damnation and death; and that the law has him by the neck, crying, pay me what thou owest!

That on the contrary the believer in Jesus has full interest in the remedial righteousness of his Lord; and that therefore he is pardoned, justified, and brought into a state of peace with God, and moral submission to his authority!

These are not, and surely, they are not pretended to be, discoveries! But they are truths not appreciated; truths driven from their proper station and eminence in the gospel, by certain systematizers. We shall meet them again!

I hope it will appear that a prominent and important distinction has been established between the law of works, and the law of grace; namely that we are brought under the obligation and curse of the original law, without our knowledge, privity, or consent; but that we are brought to enjoy all the benefits of the remedial law only by faith, which implies our

knowledge of, and our consent to, the remedial system.

I do not mean to dig from their graves, errors which time has buried in oblivion; nor do I wish to expose and dissect too minutely the putrescent corpses of others, which yet continue above ground, loathsome and contagious; else it might be shewed that the doctrine of this chapter, obvious and scriptural as it is, has been often overlooked; and that too by some, whose apparatus of metaphysical microscopes and telescopes, seemed to promise, that the most remote objects were not beyond their reach, nor the most minute too small for their detection. It is better, however, to state the truth itself: the best panegeric on a beautiful countenance, is to let it be seen.

Least, however, the doctrine respecting the absolute necessity of faith to secure an interest in salvation, should be carried out of its own proper sphere, to work mischief in other regions, I beg leave to subjoin a few observations on a subject which never was a favourite of mine.

It has been asked, are all the heathen, all idiots, and all infants to be damned; since they are absolutely incapable of faith in Jesus Christ? What I have to say will go rather to check vain and criminal speculations on these subjects, than to satisfy the cravings of idle curiosity.

1. In respect to the heathen, I judge, that no man who seriously considers their moral condition and conduct, can cherish any other than doleful impressions respecting their future doom. The apostle Paul viewed their condition with deep distress. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom

they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* Yet I do not know that any one has ever been hardy enough to assert, that it is impossible for the Lord Jesus to apply the benefits of his redemption, by some visitation of his spirit unknown to us, to those who have never heard his gospel preached. The only decision which I know to have been given is this: "That out of the visible church there is no *ordinary* hope of salvation." This I believe to be true. But we must leave this hope in its painful generality. When we come to examine individual character among the heathen, the prospect blackens.

But what have we to do with the question? Are we afraid that the judge of all the earth will not do right? Do we think that we by searching can find out God, that we can find out the Almighty to perfection? May we not leave the heathen in the hands of God, whose justice and mercy secure them against wrong. Our duty is to pray for them, and to send them the gospel. This may do them some good, and will certainly do good to ourselves, by augmenting our everlasting reward. But what good can it do either them or us, to sit disputing about the abstract possibility of their salvation!

The case of babes is still more interesting to us than that of the heathen. It comes home to the bosoms of all mankind. All over society, some of the finest feelings of the human heart—its tenderest and most interesting anxieties—are excited and kept in constant energy, by the present condition and future prospect of those little inconscious feeble things, whose help-

* Rom. x. 13. 14.

lessness God has committed to all the combined powers and sensibilities of matured humanity; and in whose behalf by far the greater part of human efforts, and by far the greatest amount of human virtue, are and ever must be displayed. As a large portion of infants die very soon after they are born, and as scarcely one of them escapes excrutiating diseases and imminent peril of life, parents who believe in the doctrine of a future state of happiness or misery, cannot avoid casting an anxious eye towards the mists of that world, whose "light is as darkness," in order to catch some straggling ray, to enable them to form a conjecture, a hope if possible, that their afflicted and dying babes, will be happy hereafter. Why they should not be permitted to conjecture, and hope for the best, I cannot tell. But let their hopes be consistent with the revealed truth of God; let them be combined with the discharge of every commanded duty. Let them not be the hopes of infidel blasphemy.

It must be confessed, however, that we frequently find hopes cherished on this subject, which we cannot in conscience justify or encourage. There are parents, not a few, so ignorant of the doctrine of the Bible, and so fondly partial to their offspring, probably for no other or better reason than that it is theirs, as to conclude that because their babe has been incapable of actual transgression, it is therefore in every sense an innocent; as pure and immaculate an innocent, as the babe of Bethlehem; and they consequently assert for it a seat and station in paradise, from the naked justice of the deity, without any reference to the mediatorial merits of Jesus Christ. It would be as useless to provoke their resentment, as it is hopeless to attempt the cure of their error.

Alas! they know not "that death is the wages of sin;" and that "death hath passed upon all, because all have sinned," and that "as by man came death, by man also cometh the resurrection and the life." It never once occurs to them, and they would indignantly spurn the idea were it suggested, that in asserting the absolute and unqualified innocence of their child, they do no less than table an indictment against Jehovah, for the torments and death, which he has inflicted before their eyes. They are in too great a storm and tempest of the passions to be in a mood for reasoning correctly, else they would have concluded, that if perfect innocence receives such severe treatment in this world at the hand of God, reason has no certain ground of assurance, that it will receive any better treatment in the world to come. But we may drop this subject: the hopes of future happiness, whether in respect to babes or men, which are not bottomed upon the mediatorial interposition of the son of God, are entitled to no consideration among christians.

There are other persons, who founding the hope of future happiness, in all cases, upon the mediatorial sacrifice of Jesus, assert the universal salvation of infants in consequence of the merit of that sacrifice. It is not easy to see the connection between their premises and conclusion. It would be invidious to sift too minutely trains of speculation, which obviously wear more of the appearance of travelling thoughts, than of deliberate investigations. I shall therefore simply remark, that one class of the speculators alluded to, found the salvation of all infants, on a couched, but not avowed, hypothesis, that the infliction of punishment upon persons not guilty of per-

sonal transgression, would be an act of injustice in God. These speculators, equally with the infidels, are bound to deny that the unnumerable calamities, which affect our infantine days, and the death of so many thousand babes, who never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, is consistent with the justice of Jehovah. They must deny that the death of infants, is the wages of sin; and then they must answer the question—What is it? By what perfection of God, is such suffering inflicted on (as they say) his innocent offspring. In another system of speculation on this subject, I am inclined to think, that the hypothesis of the universal salvation of all infants, is a benevolent retribution in another world, intended to balance a sentence of practical severity inflicted on them in this. And, to say no more on this subject, there is still a third class of speculators who adopt the opinion of the universal salvation of infants, I can neither conjecture why nor wherefore. I can trace no definite analogy between this opinion and the other parts of their system, except one which is so ludicrous that I suppress it. Still this said opinion is a mere *dictum*—a *gratis dictum*, an *ipse dixit*. It has never been proved from the Scripture. It may be true. Far be it from me to say it is either true or false. I strongly wish that it may be true. But wishes are not opinions. And until some one shall prove that God has explicitely revealed his own determination in the case, I shall contentedly remain in ignorance—perfectly assured that the judge of all the earth will do right.

But what shall I say of those who decide dogmatically against the salvation of infants, at least of some infants? And who, as if the most horrid of human de-

cisions ought of right to be uttered in the most horrid terms of human language, coolly talk *"about babes a span long in the flames of hell!"* Who has authorised them to pronounce such horrors in God's world, among God's creatures? God has said no such thing in all the Bible, they have not a text for it. If indulgence were due to presumption—I should look with indulgence upon that benevolent presumption, which decides in favour of the salvation of the whole infantine class of our family, who fall the victims of death, before they have done either good or evil on earth. The benevolence of deity—the mercy of the remedial system—and that totality of social feelings, which links me to all the interests and fortunes of my kind; would make me indulgent in this case—if it were possible, or dutiful, in any case not to frown indignant on the presumption which pries into the secrets of Jehovah, snatches the words from his lips, and pronounces, long before he is prepared to pronounce, his final sentence on his guilty creatures. But if the gratuitous hypothesis of benevolence cannot find tolerance, why should the gratuitous horrors of saturnine severity expect that boon? The appalling decision that there are babes in hell a span long, at least harrows the human feelings in every human bosom—and in many creates a strong repugnance to the gospel. Now before any human being shall presume either to harrow the human feelings, or to create a single prejudice against the gospel, in a single human breast, by the pronunciation of any sentence; he is bound to lay his finger on the text of Scripture, and to say, the Lord hath sent me to pronounce these words in your ears. Before Jehovah

we will lay our hand on our mouth; and lowly in the dust will we cry unclean! unclean!

Without pursuing this subject further, may I be indulged in mentioning, such wanderings of the mind, as I have experienced on the topic in discussion. With respect to the offspring of God's own people, who are expressly, and by name included in the divine promises; who are the objects not only of parental affection and anxiety, but of parental prayer; and in the hour of death, the objects of strong cryings for mercy, with groanings unutterable, and intercessions of the Holy Ghost—I do not permit myself to entertain any fears respecting their future happiness. It is not for man to torment himself with such gratuitous fears in a world like this. But with respect to the progeny of the impious and profligate, whose birth is hailed by nothing more sacred than orgies and revelry; for whose life no thanks are offered up to heaven; and by whose death bed no tears of penetential sorrows flow, no prayer of faith ascends to the throne of remedial grace; no merciful Creator, no bleeding Redeemer, no purifying Spirit, is invoked; with respect to these I say nothing.—I could never keep my mind steady to think on the subject. But I can no more place the latter babes, on a par with the former; than I can place the parents of these on a par with the parents of those. Yet I would not dare to decide against the salvation of even these babes, so inauspiciously born. Since it has pleased God to keep his counsels secret; who can conjecture how he will act. His infinite grace may place both on an equal level. But blessed are the seed of the righteous, the objects of faithful prayer and supplication!

What then is our decision?—Will all infants be saved?—or only some of them? God only knoweth! And indeed the subject carries deeply branded on its forehead the sure characteristic mark of an insolveable problem—which is this: That the solution, if given, could do us no possible good; and I think the man possesses but a dull imagination, who cannot conceive many ways in which it might possibly be injurious.

The case of idiots belongs to the same moral predicament, as that of infants. In neither is the capacity of moral action developed; both are equally free from actual sin, or actual righteousness. The babe is a temporary idiot; the idiot a perpetual babe. And so we close our discussion respecting the salvation of heathens, infants, and idiots; craving only the indulgence of a few sentences, in respect to our general doctrine concerning the indispensible necessity of faith to salvation.

In respect to babes, (I exemplify in their name, the reasoning is easily transferable to the other two classes,) I could readily say what has been often said by others; that though incapable of the act of faith, they are capable of that sanctified frame of soul, from which faith flows. Their condition as rational creatures, may give us a conception of their possible condition as renewed creatures. The new born babe, though it reasons not, is a rational creature; though it does neither good nor evil, it is a moral agent: it contains within itself, all the embryo power of a rational moral man, which only awaits the proper exciting causes to evolve them, and bring them into action. The human family recognise such babes as brothers and sisters; human governments consider them as citizens; justice spreads over their feebleness her holy shield, and punishes

infanticide as the most atrocious of murders. From which it is easy to conceive that infants may be regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and may have within them the embryo seeds of faith and of all the other christian graces and virtues. They form no real exception to the general rule which exacts faith as an essential requisite to salvation.

The gospel is preached, not to babes, but to those of our race who have attained the use of their reason; and it is in relation to them that we assert the absolute and indispensible necessity of explicit faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.

This doctrine is not only taught in the Scriptures, but it is taught every where in them; it is taught not only intentionally, but emphatically; the sacred writers not only tell it to us, but they tell it to us on all occasions, and whenever they open their lips; whatever they please to say, or whatever they please not to say, they are always sure not to omit this: "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned!"

CHAPTER X.

THE DOUBLE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN—REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY—AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

THE doctrines of John Calvin and of James Arminius, or the general systems of religious opinions which they respectively adopted, differed from each other much less, than the systems of those large and wide spread sects, which are at this day known by the names of Calvinists and Arminians. It is only in recent and small sects that uniformity of doctrine can exist. As soon as a sect spreads abroad and multiplies, numbers attach themselves to it, who are but partially acquainted with its doctrines; and many bring with them pre-established opinions, which are not homogeneous with those of the body politic with which they are incorporated. Within the community also there will spring up a succession of new speculators, some of whom will begin to doubt the doctrine of their master in some particulars, and accordingly suffer it to die away; whilst others fired with the ambition of discovery, and determined that their system shall be brought to the utmost perfection, will add to it new inventions of their own. Hence at the end of a century no sect, perhaps, exhibits exactly the doctrine of its founder.

The Calvinistic and Arminian sects which, so far as doctrine is concerned, divide the reformation church between them, may be compared to two cones projected on the same base, and tapering away in opposite directions, towards their respective apices. The farther they recede from their common base, the less of christianity is found in them; till at last, by the law of convergency, it evanishes altogether, or at least becomes too minute to be worth looking after—*vox et præterea nil.* In examining into this moral phenomenon, and endeavouring to ascertain its cause, many have laboured—among the rest the present writer; whose opinions, however, shall not be brought forward in the shape of censures upon others, but in the simple exhibition of what he considers, and hopes to prove, to be revealed truth.

The Holy Scriptures do clearly teach us, that man in every respect, and specifically in respect to his eternal destination, is placed under a double responsibility. These two species of responsibility I shall call

REPRESENTATIVE OR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

I shall show from the Scriptures, that these two species of responsibility actually do exist; that they are in their nature distinct; and that still they are united in the earthly fortunes of mankind, and in their final allotment. In the sequel it may appear, that one class of speculators have been so entirely engrossed by the representative, or social, responsibility of man, that they have forgotten his personal responsibility; hence they have speculated on the imputation

of Christ's righteousness to believers as the procuring cause of eternal life, till they have become blind to the necessity of a personal righteousness, and maintained antinomianism, as the purity and perfection of the gospel. Others again have run an equally fatal course, by limiting their views exclusively to the individual responsibility of man.

In pursuing that sound and scriptural principle, that men are punished for their personal transgressions, and rewarded for their personal virtues, they have thought themselves justified in denying the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer for his justification, and have treated that scriptural doctrine with cavalier contempt, and daring asperity; and have assigned causes for justification, so totally inadequate, as to bring the direct imputation of unrighteousness upon the judge. And thus, as in such cases it always happens, the defence of one truth becomes the destruction of another; and on both sides zeal degenerates into animosity, while each party supports with irrefragable demonstration its own first and radical truth; but reasons sophistically, and with ill temper and reproachful language, the common attendants on sophistry, when it essays to discomfit and annihilate the no less sound and irrefragable truth of the other. In the discussion upon which I am about to enter I shall stand in much need of the candour of my readers; and conscious that I deserve it, I shall not despair of experiencing it.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY.

I care nothing about terms, nor will I dispute with any one, whether the above terms are, or are not, the

most suitable to be used in the present discussion: but it is necessary that I should leave no doubt respecting the ideas I attach to them.

To begin, as usual, with that part of the subject which lies nearest us, and on which the light shines clearest, I bring forward the awful fact, and the scriptural account of that fact, that the whole human family have been brought into a state of sin and death by the transgression of Adam. It cannot be denied by any faithful, or by any infidel man, that our race are mortal. The infidel indeed will assign any reason for the phenomenon, rather than that assigned by inspiration. The believing man however is sure, because God has told him, "that the wages of sin is death."* In reading his Bible he finds, in the very first promulgation of the divine law to man, the punishment of death denounced against sin: "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."† Wherever he beholds death, he beholds the "wages," the "punishment" of sin. Death and sin are bound together by adamantine associations in his mind. He cannot conceive of sin without death following it; he cannot conceive of death without sin preceding it. They are bound together as moral cause and effect, by the eternal immutable necessity which causes the Almighty to be just. The christian man sees things in that light which the spirit of inspiration has shed on them. He knows that "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."‡ There must be a law, else there could be no sin; for where there is no law there can be no transgression. There must be transgression, else there could be no death, no punishment, no wages of sin. All men die, he says, all men pay the wages

* Rom. vi. 23. † Gen. ii. 17. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 56.

of sin, or suffer the punishment of transgression; they are treated as violators of the law, by the righteous judge and sovereign of the world; and, therefore, without troubling himself with foolish speculations, the believing man concludes, that all men suffer death justly. After all his discussion of this momentous theme, he adopts, in the plain common-sense import of the terms, the scriptural statement—"Death hath passed on all men, for that all have sinned."* If he be as cautious in speculation, as he is candid in faith, he limits this moral connection between sin and death, to the human family. He will not be rash in adopting the notion of one class of speculators, that the death of inferior animals, has the same moral connections as the death of man, the true and only subject of moral law on earth. Still less is he in danger of acquiescing in the theories of those, who represent the death of man as no more than a branch of that system of life, death, and reproduction, which Providence exhibits on earth. It is sufficient for him that death hath passed on "all men, for that all men have sinned." If he ventures a single speculation on the subject of death, beyond the human family, it is after he has cast the best bower anchor of christian faith, in its surest moorings; and the results of his musings, whatever they may be, will never form any part of his faith.

But here a question arises of a troublesome aspect: Can new born infants be called on to pay the wages, to suffer the punishment, of sin? If the Scriptures had not expressly decided this question, I suspect it would have ever remained insolvable by man. We may safely presume that men would have asked how could

* Rom. v. 12.

a babe commit sin? and this question would have undoubtedly been connected with its twin brother, "whether the soul is incessantly active from its first existence." As this latter question does not admit of demonstrative, but only of probable evidence, it has divided the votes of the philosophical world: and we may easily conjecture, that a similar division would have taken place on the theological question.

The Scriptures, however, have spared us the trouble of speculation, on a subject which could never have yielded us any thing but trouble. Thus they decide, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression."* This passage implies that there are of those who suffer death, some who had sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and that there are others who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; yet over the latter, as much as the former, death reigns. The two parties thus distinguished obviously are those of our race who are capable, and those who are incapable, of moral action; to save trouble by omitting a few scattering cases of moral incompetence among the adults of the human family, I shall consider myself as perfectly understood, when I call the two classes specified, ADULTS and INFANTS.

Death reigns over adults; but you will say, they merited death by their own sins! Most true they did! The father was a traitor, and the son, as soon as he was capable of acting, took up the weapons of his father's rebellion: and I grant that it is the most natural thing in the world, when we see him led out to an ignominious death, to fix our thoughts on his

* Rom. v. 14.

personal treason, as the cause of this catastrophe, and to forget for the time his hereditary taint of blood. Of this class of sinners we need say no more.

But here is the other class, the infants, of whom the spirit of God says, that they never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; who are therefore by Jehovah himself acquitted of all actual personal guilt; and who consequently neither are, nor can be punished for any sin which they ever committed in their own persons. Yet they die—and "death is the wages of sin"—and the sentence of the law—and therefore, Jehovah, judging according to the law given to man in paradise, condemns to death, the wages and punishment of sin, those whom he pronounces free of all actual sin of their own. For whose sin then do they suffer? For Adam's, and nothing else. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men for that all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." And to add no more—"In Adam all die." Hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Since infants who never sinned, receive the wages, and suffer the punishment of sin, which is death; and since all of our race were infants, before they were adults, it follows that the whole human race are liable to death for Adam's sin. This is what I call the representative responsibility of man. We are all held responsible for the conduct of our ancestor Adam; and are doomed to die for his rebellion. I call him our representative because his

conduct affects us, as it affects himself. But I will dispute with no man about words. Let it be admitted that Adam's sin has brought all mankind into the same state of sin and death, into which it brought himself; and out of which nothing but the remedial interposition of the Son of God can save us.—Let this be admitted, and let mankind express it by what sounds and syllables they please.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Little need be said on this subject. Almost all mankind, in all ages, have admitted that every man is responsible for his own conduct. A few frantic enthusiasts, who have imagined themselves to be so absurdly favoured of heaven, that the laws of morality have been abolished in their favour; a few bewildered metaphysicians, who in their survey left out this piece of our heavenly inheritance, because it was not suited to the shape of the paper, on which they were to plot their map; and a few desperate profligates, who from being the slaves of vice, became its advocates, have denied the doctrine; such men there always have been, and there always will be. But they are nearly as destitute of influence, as they are incapable of improvement; and may therefore be passed by without further notice.

The Scriptures tell us, in the most unequivocal language, that the wages of sin is death; not of Adam's sin only, but the wages of every man's sin, the wages of all sin is death. They assure us that the soul which sinneth, it shall die. Every man has a personal account and reckoning to render for himself. There are servants who do not perform their

master's will, because they know it not, who will be punished with few stripes; and there are others who perform not their master's will, although they know it, who therefore shall be punished with many stripes. Every man has an individuality of his own; a distinct personality of his own; and in his single naked personality, shall be called to render an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil. But as I shall have to labour some other points more precisely, I shall take it for granted, that enough has been offered on a point which can scarcely be said to be disputed.

I have, I hope, proved the existence of a double responsibility which attaches to the human character; a representative responsibility, according to which we are called to account for Adam's sin; and, in the case of infants, die for it: and a personal responsibility, by which every man is held accountable for his own conduct. I shall now demonstrate that these are distinct systems; that is, that neither of them can be inferred from the other; but that each has its own peculiar economy and properties. And that though each of these systems deeply affects the multifarious condition of man, neither of them is a cause, or a consequence of the other.

REPRESENTATIVE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, DISTINCT SYSTEMS.

I go back to paradise. I see Adam placed under the law, according to which law he is to act for his whole race; all of whom are to share in the reward of his righteousness, or the punishment of his disobedience. But does it follow that if Adam shall pro-

duce the righteousness of the law, then its demands will be absolutely exhausted, and of course cease? Quite the reverse.

The law has an everlasting indefeasible claim on Adam and all his posterity. If the representative righteousness of the law had been produced by Adam, the consequence would have been the pronunciation of a sentence of life in respect to him and his posterity; just as his violation of the law has brought down a sentence of condemnation on him and them. But the law would have continued to demand personal righteousness of all mankind after their justification in Adam; just as it continues to demand personal righteousness of them all, since they have been condemned in Adam. I believe these ideas will not be controverted. But many things respecting personal obligation and responsibility, are more advantageously studied under the remedial law of grace, than under the original law of works.—The fact is, the original law of works was so short a time in operation, that only a very small part of the system ever was developed. And therefore, it is only in the remedial system, that we can form a comprehensive estimate of the compass and capacity of the original law. Thus in hospitals, by morbid anatomy, and morbid action, and by all the extraordinary efforts by which nature struggles to free herself from parts unprofitable and peccant, and to restore herself to her primitive state and integrity, physicians learn the extensive original powers of that microcosm man.

Short a time as the original law continued in operation, it developed one fact, which demonstrates beyond all contradiction the distinct nature of repre-

sentative and personal responsibility. The particular fact I allude to, is Eve's personal subjection to the divine law. She owned her personal responsibility to the tempter.—"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."* God called her to account for her transgression, she acknowledged her sin, and received a severe rebuke and commination.† She is represented as beguiled;‡ and as being first "in the transgression."§ There can be no doubt at all, that Eve was a subject of the law of works, and that she violated it previous to the transgression of Adam.

Yet it is a fact clearly revealed, that the covenant was made with Adam previous to the formation of Eve; it was his covenant, not her's; it is he that brought sin into the world, that is brought sin upon his posterity, and not she; it is in Adam all die, not in Eve. It is Adam who was the figure of the Redeemer, and not his wife. There is not a whisper in the Bible that death came on the human family for Eve's sin. God never charges guilt in that direction. And I think we can have no great inducement to forge a title to so unfortunate a legacy.

Eve therefore, did not violate the law for her posterity; she could not violate it for Adam, for she never was his head and representative; and Adam had not violated the covenant at all. In what character then did Eve stand when she was in the transgression? In her own personal character alone—on her personal responsibility, she acted; by her personal act, she sinned; and, personally, incurred the

* Gen. iii. 2. 3. † 1 Cor. xi. 2. ‡ Gen. iii. 13. 14. 16. § 1 Tim. ii. 14.

penalty of transgression. While yet the representative, stood firm without guilt or thought of offending There is therefore an essential distinction between representative responsibility, and personal responsibility in the covenant of works. The representative stood firm, no guilt either personal to himself, or transmissible to others, had yet occurred—And still Eve had incurred guilt and death by her own personal act.

Certainly the distinction which I labour to establish, is a legitimate one. It is in the Bible. I have not invented it. It is in the nature of things. I am not unaware that others have given other accounts of the subject before us. But I do not notice them. They seem to me too ludicrous for serious argument, and I feel the main subject too mournfully serious for the indulgence of satire. The distinction between representative and personal responsibility is so essential to every correct estimate of human society, that he who is not master of it, will see nothing but incongruities, and talk nothing but absurdities. I can exemplify the remark any where between the poles and the equator. But the best example in the whole, is the very one in hand, the example of Adam and Eve. If when Eve was created, she had been placed under no personal obligation to obey the divine law, we would then have a moral agent, a person with all the moral faculties, and capacities possessed by Adam, condemned to moral insignificance; for this moral agent would be incapable of performing a single act of obedience to God, because as she had no law, she could neither obey, nor disobey, her Creator. She might enrapture her husband by the charms of her person, but how low, how half joyless, and unen-

deared the raptures, while there was no living salient spring of satisfaction from the charms of the moral mind; no mutual raptures of devotion, no symphonies of common praise, hymning the glories of their common Lord, no communion in virtuous deeds, where thought meets thought, and feeling melts into feeling; no common hope of ascending to common glory, by mutual deeds of piety and virtue. Such was not the state of things. Eve was no Hourie. Formed of Adam's substance, united to him by bonds of love which had nothing to do, except emblematically, with the manner of her derivation of human nature: she stood deeply dependant on him for instruction, example, and happiness. But she was not entirely merged and lost in him. She was a moral agent, and must act for herself. She must think her own thoughts, cherish her own affections, will her own volitions, perform her own actions. Life and death, the blessing and the curse, were placed before her, as well as before her husband; she must think, chose, and act for herself, and at last inherit her own reward.

Perhaps some propounder of riddles may ask, what would have been the consequence, if Adam had sinned, and Eve retained her integrity? I answer, the crisis stated never took place in human affairs, and never can take place. It never, therefore, can be our duty to inquire into it; such inquiry would, probably, be criminal; certainly it would be unsatisfactory. I have not that reliance on the moral judgment of any of our race, as to believe that he can tell how God will, or will not act in any assigned case, unless he has himself informed us, or given us a case in point. The whole remedial system is such a miracle—so unlikely—so unexpected—so contrary to all that could have

been conjectured—and yet so consonant to the perfections of Jehovah, that it should silence us. When any new moral crisis shall occur, Jehovah will no doubt act like himself. But I question if any creature will ever be able to conjecture how he will act.

If I have dwelt a little on this theme, my apology is, that I was anxious to establish this distinction between the representative and personal responsibility of the human race, because I shall shortly have to show that this distinction, essential to the moral history of the human family, and essential to the covenant of works, is not only not abolished, but firmly maintained through the whole of the remedial administration of that covenant by the Son of God. A subject on which I feel the greater anxiety to acquit myself to the satisfaction of the sons of truth; because some others have not treated it entirely to my satisfaction; and because confused ideas on this subject, once involved myself in a long and melancholy train of distractions, the recollection of which can give pleasure, only because they can never return.

CHAPTER XI.

A VIEW OF THE REMEDIAL LAW OF GRACE, AS COVERING THE WHOLE GROUND OF THE ORIGINAL LAW OF WORKS.

As THE subject of this chapter comprises the whole of christianity, it is manifestly impossible to avoid repeating doctrines already advanced, or anticipating others yet to be discussed in detail. A general outline must be drawn, and it would be a false and fastidious taste, which would exclude from it any thing essential to its completeness.

1. That Jesus Christ appeared on earth as Mediator between God and man, I have discussed sufficiently. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. But that to which I wish, especially, to call the reader's attention, is the fact, that it is, by means of the very law which was broken, that Jesus must effect salvation. Jesus does not enter our world like some reformers, who commence their work by abolishing every existing establishment. On the contrary, the whole original law stands as he found it; and, by its native inherent capabilities, furnishes him with the

method of saving those whom it had already condemned. "God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."* Nothing in the law, no, nothing of all is changed. It has obtained a new subject, of very different power and competence, from any that had ever been under it; but it alters no one of its claims. It is the same to him as to them. Law is immutable, it has no favourites, softens no demands, exacts no work of supererogation. It was that law which offered man eternal life at first; and it is by that law alone, that ever he can enjoy it.

3. The remedial righteousness of Jesus, that which he wrought out in his own person; and the righteousness, which he works out in each believer's person; the former of which Luther called the "passive righteousness," because man enjoys it without having been active in its production; the latter of which he called the "active righteousness," because each person is active in its production, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, while God worketh in him both to will and to do; these two I say have distinct offices, uses, and ends, according to the nature of the original law.

If Adam had kept the original law, his righteousness would have entailed life on all his posterity. In the remedial administration of the law by Jesus, his righteousness, serves the same end to believers, which Adam's righteousness would have served to all his posterity. It brings them into a state of pardon, justification, and acceptance with God. They are the reinstated heirs of immortality. If they sin they have an advocate with the Father, whose merit

* Gal. iv. 4.

and intercession with the Father, will secure their faith from entirely failing, even when Satan sifts them as wheat. Thus is the righteousness of Christ in the room of the righteousness of Adam to every believer: hence Calvin calls Jesus the "Substitute of Adam" in the covenant; because his righteousness has the same effect of securing eternal life to believers, which Adam's righteousness would have had in respect to all his posterity: he is a new Adam to them, he has secured to them eternal life; thus has the mediatorial righteousness of the son of God the same place, power and efficacy, with the representative righteousness of Adam, had it been produced. The reason why the efficacy of Christ's righteousness is in every instance suspended on the faith of the believer, has been fully argued already. As I proved, that our race were placed under a double reponsibility, which I called representative responsibility, and personal responsibility, so I have now showed, that in the remedial system, the righteousness of Christ stands for the former. I am well aware of some differences, but I pass over them, lest I should render indistinct the prominent features of my outline. I mean merely to assert the grand fact, that as to their common end and issue the righteousness of Adam and the righteousness of Christ would produce the same effect under the law, to any who might have an interest in them, namely the ultimate enjoyment of eternal life.

4. The personal responsibility of each individual remains unaltered. The representative righteousness of Adam never would have been a substitute for the personal duties of his posterity. Each would have owed, for himself, complete righteousness, and

would in the end have received his own reward. In like manner, the remedial righteousness of Jesus Christ, is no substitute for the inherent personal righteousness of his saints. If that were the case, he would set aside that part of the original law, which required personal righteousness from every man. He would abolish the whole moral law among his own subjects; he would legalise every horrid deed, he would abolish all law, all virtue, all vice, all rewards, all punishments, all morality, all government. What a tremendous idea must some men have attached to redemption. They have represented the Son of God as having ransomed men from the obligation to holiness. Far different is the case.

The Mediator having obtained pardon through his own righteousness for the believer, has a new labour of love to perform. He undertakes the superintendance and management of the man, to produce and to perfect in him, that personal righteousness, which will enable him to meet his personal responsibility in the day of judgment. The law, which they are under, requires a personal righteousness; and the believer must have it; and his Redeemer alone can help him to it. Here it is that our blessed Redeemer, puts into requisition all the forces of heaven and of earth. Here it is that, to our eyes at least, he unveils his glories in the distinctest manner. It was a glorious scene, when he triumphed over death, and him that had the power of it. But the atonement of the Son of God, is a subject so vastly disproportioned to the human understanding, that it overwhelms our conception. We can have nothing like an adequate idea of what he suffered, and God grant we never may. But when the Redeemer dis-

plays that mixture of wisdom and power, of grace and severity; of temptations and well timed succours, which we behold in the church all around us, and which every true christian feels in his own conscious bosom; the glory of their Redeemer is brought near to all his saints; they approach their perihelion, and bask in the rays of the sun of righteousness.

I proceed now to demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures, that the personal responsibility of mankind is not abolished, changed, or modified, in the remedial system. It stands there precisely as it stood in the original law. Their Redeemer grants to all his saints supplies of grace—abundant, rich and varied supplies of pure grace, which men would not have needed, at least in that specific form, had they continued in innocence. But these supplies are given, in order to enable them to meet their personal responsibility, on the ground of pure justice, in the day of judgment; a day, which justice has marked for her own.

I hope I shall be heard with candour; that my evidence will be weighed; that I shall be allowed to draw my own conclusions; that nothing else will be charged upon me; and, in particular, that I shall not be made an offender for words. For, indeed, I am not profoundly acquainted with the technical terms of scholastic theology, having, for a long time, systematically studied to forget them; contenting myself with the terms of the Scripture, and such plain English phrases as seem to express my ideas, without being extremely curious in the selection.

And here our first business will be to obtain, if we can, a just idea of the judgment to come, and of its nature, end, and object. We shall, at least, take the true road towards satisfaction, by quoting the Scrip-

tures liberally, and not burying them under the rubbish of superfluous and impertinent explanations.

Mat. xvi. 24—27. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

John v. 25—29. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

Luke xii. 47—48. "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew it not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Mat. xxv. 31—46. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?—when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?—or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them—Verily I say unto thee, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying—Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying—Verily I say unto

you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

From these passages of Scripture—words uttered by no other lips than those of our Mediatorial Sovereign, we learn distinctly, that individuality of character is maintained in his moral empire; that each particular man will be judged according to his own particular character, and rewarded or punished according as his deeds shall have been good or evil; and that the measure of happiness and glory which each saint shall enjoy, will be proportioned to the measure of holiness and virtue, which he shall be found to possess.

I do not surely mention these things as discoveries; but having often beheld people touching the doctrine of rewards and punishments with an extremely timid hand—a timidity, as I conceive injurious to the revealed truth of God, and not promotive of practical righteousness, I thought it to be a duty to attempt placing the subject in its true scriptural light. Every thing in salvation is undoubtedly of grace, free and sovereign grace; "by grace ye are saved." But in showing that the reward of righteousness assigned to the saints in the judgment day is of grace, some men talk as if it were entirely optional with God whether he should reward that righteousness or not; in other words, that there would be no injustice in God, were he to refuse rewarding the saints according to their works; nay, that it would not be unjust in him to cast them into hell. But such a sentiment, however it may fortify itself with metaphysics and argument, is directly contradictory of the Scriptures. The apostle

Paul teaches otherwise. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered unto the saints and do minister."* He founds the reward of the saints upon the moral righteousness of Jehovah; he supposes that it would be unrighteousness in God not to reward their righteousness and labour of love; and he teaches them to expect a reward not because God is a being of sovereign goodness, but because he is a righteous judge. It was to the righteousness of God, that Paul himself looked forward for a reward. "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."†

The same apostle when preaching on Mars' hill at Athens, to the learned Athenian philosophers, concludes his discourse in this manner: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold and silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in RIGHTEOUSNESS, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."‡

Indeed the sacred writers are more earnest in nothing, than in impressing upon mankind their individual personal responsibility unto God; in impressing upon them the all-important truth that they must each

* Heb. vi. 10. † II Tim. iv. 7, 8. ‡ Acts xvii. 29—31.

for himself possess a personal righteousness; a righteousness which is as much their own, as the original righteousness of Adam was his own. "Follow peace with all men," says the apostle. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."* Without personal holiness no man shall see the Lord; and it is this inherent personal holiness which is the object of the celestial reward.

When Jesus sits judge of the world in the great judgment day, the law under which man was placed in paradise, essentially the same under all its modes of administration, will be the law by which all men will be judged. Those who will be found to have personally obeyed that law will be rewarded; those who will be found in a state of alienation from the law, and workers of iniquity, will be punished.

Thus then, to the glory of my Redeemer, I assert that he meets the law at all points, and satisfies all its demands of every sort. I assert that he meets the forlorn race of man in all their wretchedness and guilt, and provides a remedy for every evil, a salve for every wound, an *elixir vitæ*, which can not only render life immortal, but even cure the dead. To the glory of the Bible I assert, that it teaches us all this, plainly, simply, assuredly: the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err in this way. And therefore, since the subject which we handle is of such infinite importance, let us diffuse ourselves abroad over its length and its breadth, upwards towards its heighth, and downwards towards its depth, according to the measure which God has meted out to us, and to the prospects of human instruction which he affords.

* Heb. xii. 14.

When a human limb has been long out of joint, it forms a new articulation for itself; and medical science submits to the necessity of leaving it as it is, rather than risk the consequences which might succeed to an attempt at its reduction. The dislocations of human thought occasioned by prejudice and system, are numerous and inveterate; but we must in no case absolutely despair of success in our attempts to rectify the human mind. The connection between the mediatorial righteousness of the Son of God, and the personal righteousness of the saints; and the connection between this latter righteousness and its reward have been frequently misunderstood; the latter I conceive is not distinctly perceived, at present, by some who preach the gospel, in great sincerity, and with much of the divine blessing upon their labours. To this subject, therefore, we shall devote a chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

HUMAN MERIT AND DEMERIT CONSIDERED AT LARGE, IN REFERENCE TO THE FINAL JUDGMENT, AND FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

THE word merit as it has been applied to the virtues of fallen man, has so many meanings, and those so inconsistent with each other, and often so irreconcileable with truth, that the most judicious proceeding is to drop it altogether. As terms which by vulgar use suggest indecent ideas, are discarded from the vocabulary of polished society, and euphemic terms adopted in their stead, which express the same objects, without the offensive associations; so should we discard every theological term, which has the misfortune of suggesting erroneous associations. Among such words do I reckon MERIT, and DEMERIT, as they are generally used in regard to the saints in the judgment day. I consider therefore these vocables to be very improper, and dangerous instruments of thought, and of communication, on the subject at present under consideration; and shall accordingly forego their use, and investigate the subject without their aid.

1. I am convinced that a great deal of mischief has occurred from confounding the character of the saint on earth, with the character of the saint in the day of judgment, and transferring to the one character the moral excellence, relations, and attributes of the

other. But oh! how different is the condition of a saint on earth, imperfect in holiness, defiled with sin, and groaning under tribulations; from the state of the same saint in the day of judgment, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—perfect in holiness. Let us compare these two characters; let us also contrast them; let us weigh them in the balance; let us estimate them justly if we can.

And here it must be carefully remarked, that so long as the saint is on earth, his business lies chiefly with his defects, his short comings, and his sins. He may without criminality or danger turn away his eyes from contemplating his gracious attainments, but he incurs both guilt and danger, if he ceases to contemplate the pollution of his heart, and the faultiness of his conduct. Hence he is full of convictions, full of confessions, abundant in tears and supplications for pardon. I do not say that he never should examine and ascertain the exact amount of his graces and virtues; for it is written "whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."* But his main duty is to imitate Paul, who thus describes his own habitual conduct: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."† The same apostle has enjoined this conduct by precept: "therefore,"

* Phil. iii. 16. † Phil. iii. 12—14.

says he, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection."* And doubtless every christian, who engages in obeying this injunction and copying this example, will often have occasion to exclaim with the same apostle: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."†

So long as sin remains in the heart, and wars in the members of a pious man, it is most natural that he should shrink from appearing at the tribunal of divine justice; that he should deprecate the sentence, which the law would pronounce on him; saying unto his God, "enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."‡ Conscious that "in all things he sins and comes short of the glory of God,"§ and knowing† "that whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," the christian man feels, that he is not ready to render in his personal account to the supreme judge of the universe: he therefore has recourse by faith to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

But look to this same person, look to all the saints of God, when they are actually brought to render an account of the deeds done in the body; and that we may have as clear and definite a conception as possible of their state and condition at that time, let us pass over the dimly illuminated period between their death and resurrection, and contemplate them as they stand in the day of judgment before the supreme judge. The first thing noticeable, is, that all their sins have already been par-

* Heb. vi. 1. † Rom. vii. 24. ‡ Psal. cxliii. 2. § James ii. 10.

doned; and pardon in its own nature cancels guilt, throws sin behind the back of Jehovah, and submerges it in the sea of eternal oblivion; so that when the sins of Jacob are sought for, they are not to be found. The next thing that we discover is that these saints of God are saints indeed, absolutely pure; "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing" they are perfectly "holy and without blemish."* Even the bodies of the saints are sublimated and refined, and "fashioned like unto the glorious body"† of their Redeemer. So great is the glory of the saints in the day of judgment, that the apostle John contemplating it, thus invites his brethren in Christ to consider the elevating subject: "beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."‡

Imagine to yourselves, as well as you can, a great multitude, which no man can number, who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb, and made them white, without a stain of sin; behold them complete in every grace and virtue, conformed to the blessed image of the Son of God in body and in soul, presenting themselves before the throne of justice, to obtain pure, strict, unmixed justice, and nothing more! There is no pardon asked by them, for they have no sin! and those who have sin on that day, ask no pardon! The day of mercy and grace, of divine patience and pardoning sovereignty, is past and flown, its sun has gone down for ever. This is the day of judgment—the day which justice

* Eph. v. 27. † Phil. iii. 21. ‡ 1 John. iii. 2. 3.

marked for her own, from the foundation of the world! When Solomon looked upon the world, and considered its confused and unaccountable scene, he saw, as he tells us, "under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness that iniquity was there."* He could not possibly imagine from such a scene, that God administers strict and perfect justice in the present world; as little could he suppose, that justice would never be displayed. "And I said," says he, "in my heart, that God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." The day of judgment is the day of justice, equal justice to all mankind. The same justice, which punishes the wicked, rewards the righteous.

The same just judge, judging the world in RIGHTEOUSNESS, shall say unto the sheep on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me."† And to the goats on his left hand will he say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."‡ The same just judge pronounces these different sentences according to the same law, which is the original law of works, a law which he came into the world, not

* Ecc. iii. 16—17. † Mat. xxv. 34—36. ‡ Mat. xxv. 41—43.

to abolish, but to ratify; not to destroy, but to fulfil; not to degrade, but to magnify and make honourable. The consequence is unavoidable, namely, that there is the same legal connection between the inherent personal righteousness of the saints, and their reward, which exists between the guilt of the wicked, and their punishment; and that the former sentence is as much a dictate of pure justice as the latter.

And here, again, I must call the reader's most solemn attention to the fact, that the remedial law is accommodated to the whole extent of the original law. The righteousness of Adam would have done no more than confirm his posterity in a state of holiness and safety, while each individual would have had to work out a personal righteousness for himself, to which the law had secured a proportionate reward. In the remedial law, the righteousness of Jesus, received by faith, places the believer in a state of justification and safety with God; and by the effectual operation of the spirit of Christ, a real personal righteousness is wrought in that believer, which, when purified from all corruption, and all imperfection, and rendered perfectly conformed to the divine law, receives its proportionate reward from the righteous judge in the judgment day. We are sure that this doctrine is right, and true, and good; for we have proved, that it is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scripture. To me it owes nothing. *Cæca regens vestigia filo,* I have wound my way through a very perplexed labyrinth of human theology, without, for a moment, dropping the thread of scriptural doctrine: I have crossed a dark ocean, vexed with the storms of metaphysical speculation, and strewed with the rocks of

fanciful theories, heaving the log, and heaving the the lead every ship's length of the way. If I have, in any instance, erred, I have, at least, rendered the refutation of the error an easy task, by uniformly producing the Scriptures, on which I found my opinions; and the only refutation must consist in showing that I have misunderstood and misinterpreted those Scriptures.

I cannot, however, have done with the present subject, without remarking, that certain speculative divines, appear to me to entertain a very imperfect, and erroneous estimate of the intrinsic worth and value of that inherent personal righteousness, which the Mediator confers on all his true disciples, by the effectual operation of his spirit. They seem to speak of it as if it were not, in justice, entitled to any reward; that God would be perfectly just in withholding the reward, or even in inflicting upon saints the penalty of the broken law of works; and that if they are eventually rewarded, it is owing to the sovereign bounty, and mere good pleasure of God, without their having any the least claim on his justice. And, as this is a subject which ought either to be touched with a firm and determined hand, or not touched at all, I beg the reader's indulgence while I attempt to set, in a scriptural light, the intrinsic worth and value of the personal righteousness of the saints.

Turn then, I beseech you reader, your eyes from the imperfections which mar the piety and virtue of christians in this their imperfect and mortal condition; and concentrate your vision on the same persons in the judgment day, when they appear perfect in personal righteousness, before the throne of divine justice. They were once vile and polluted, but are they not

washed white as snow? They were once as depraved and abandoned, perhaps as any of the human race, but they "are washed, but they are sanctified, but they are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." They "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." To them is granted, that they should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. They are brought before the king in garments of needle work. They have built upon the true foundation, gold, silver and precious stones. It is written, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, but they see the Lord, because they are holy. It is said, that nothing impure can enter into heaven, but they enter into heaven, because they are pure. They are like the Son, in whose image they have been created anew in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. They once bore the image of the earthly Adam, they now bear the image of the heavenly Adam. In a word, their justifying righteousness is perfect, and their sanctifying righteousness is perfect: in the eye of the law, they are all that the law can require; and whatever the law has promised to righteousness, the judge must bestow upon them.

Are they not as innocent as ever Adam was? Are they not as perfect in personal righteousness as ever Adam, or any of his posterity, could have become? Having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and made them white, are they less white than if they never had been stained? Is their holiness less perfect, less valuable, because it has been produced by the regenerating and sanctifying spirit of Jesus the Redeemer, than it would have been, had it sprung from

the cultivation of their original powers? What matter how they get their righteousness, since they have it! Is it, in any respects, worse, because they got it from the God of grace, than if they had got it from the God of nature? If Adam had transmitted to them a justifying righteousness, would it have been preferable to the righteousness of Jesus, bestowed on them through faith? If they had been born in a state of innocence, and had wrought out the righteousness of the law, would it have been better entitled to a reward than the righteousness of the same law, wrought out in them by the sanctifying spirit of their Lord Jesus Christ? It cannot be! Let us take up the individual virtues.

They love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; is that love less valuable by having been produced by the Holy Ghost, given to them by God their Saviour; than if it had been produced by the Holy Ghost, given to them by God their Creator? Is their love of less worth, because it was kindled, sustained, and perfected by the love of God their father, and the constraining love of the Lord Jesus Christ? This love, kindled by this cause, is, to say the very least, as pure, as ardent, as unquenchable, as operative, as any love to which Adam in innocence could possible aspire. A daring speculator might, perhaps, go further; and, quoting the passage, "wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little;"* might argue thus: if the forgiveness of much sin enkindles in the heart greater love, than the forgiveness of little sin; then must the love which is kindled by

* Luke vii. 47.

the forgiveness of sin, excel that which is felt by those who never had any sin to be forgiven. I suspect this to be a correct moral conclusion, and there are laws of the human mind which might be quoted in its corroboration. But I stand not upon this, nor seek to involve my reader in refined speculations, however sound. I take my stand upon the plain moral fact, visible to even babes, that the saints in the judgment day will love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, which is all that the law requires; and that this love, will in the eye of the law, and in the eye of the judge, be of equal worth and value, with any love which innocent man could have produced. The same may be argued of the saint's love to mankind, of their justice, of their beneficence, of every act done in obedience to God's law.

I do believe that it was a tender regard to the honour of Christ's righteousness wrought out in his own person for the justification of every one who believeth, which has induced some to treat the inherent personal righteousness of the saints, as if it were worth nothing, or at least as if it were not entitled to a reward from the hands of justice. But I conceive that without advancing the honour of the Redeemer in the one case, they have sadly detracted from it in the other. The merit of Christ's mediatorial righteousness stands absolutely detached from the conduct of men; it can derive neither honour nor dishonour from comparison or contrast. On the other hand if the inherent righteousness of the saints be worth nothing, if it entitles them to no reward; pray where was the great merit in his bestowing it upon them! Allow, with the Scriptures, that the righteousness wrought in the saints is amiable, praiseworthy,

and entitled to a reward, and you obtain a clear view, and feel a deep sense of the grace, and goodness, and liberality of their Lord; who by his intercession, spirit, ordinances, and providence, wrought in them that highly valuable righteousness to which the law secures a reward.

Ah! is this the old loathsome detestable doctrine of human merit, the despoiler of the Redeemer's glory, the nurse of human pride, the pestilence and destruction of the souls of men? No indeed, it is not! It is the truth of God, and has been amply demonstrated from his own holy word: it is moreover a doctrine every way honourable to the Son of God, and in its operation on the human heart, most consolitary and advantageous to man. And, therefore, it is my imperious duty to unravel one more difficulty on the subject, and the only one, which I am aware yet remains.

Indulge me with a simile, gentle reader, that I may give the true profile of this subject. I owe a thousand dollars; and I go to my creditor and pay him down a thousand dollars, good money, current with the merchants, and recognised by the law as a legal tender; in consequence whereof, I demand and receive a receipt in full. Let us sift this case a little. I think, in the first place, that the money paid was an exact equivalent to the debt due: and in the second place I think that my creditor, having gotten his own, was bound to release me from obligation, by a receipt in full. In fact things are just as they ought to be between us.

But there is a question which my creditor never asked, namely, how I came by the money. It was nothing to him, I suppose he thought, how I ob-

tained it, it was enough for him that he got his due. But it is a matter of no small moment to me, to know how I was enabled to pay my debt: as an honest man there were two means by which I might be enabled to acquit my obligation; and according to the one or other of these means, which I employed, must the state of my present feelings and future conduct be regulated. If I earned the money by my own industry, I go away with a lofty independent spirit. I earned it, say I, by the sweat of my brow, or the toil of my brain; it was my own, and it has acquitted me. I am as independent of the world, as the world is of me: I owe no man any thing but love; thanks to the giver of all good, who enables me to support myself.

But suppose, on the other hand, that I was poor and pennyless, and by sickness or incurable disease absolutely incapable of doing any work or earning any thing; and that a generous friend came to me, saying, your bond is due and must be paid. I know you have nothing to pay it with, and that your constitution is so broken down that you never will be able to earn any thing. I am rich, here are a thousand dollars, go pay your debt and lift your bond. How now stand my moral relations? Certainly I have paid my debt, and that done I have a legal right to an acquittance. But who is to receive thanks and honour for that acquittance? Certainly not I, but my beneficent friend. My heart glows with gratitude; I return to him with tears in my eyes. Thanks to my most generous friend; you have saved my credit, you have saved my honour, you have secured my liberty; but for you I had pined away in a loathsome dungeon, without the hope or possibility of

release. I shall never be able to pay you as your generous heart knew right well, but I will love you, honour you, praise you while I have being, as the most generous and disinterested of all benefactors.

I hope that in the above lengthened similitude, the true moral bearings and relations of things, have been correctly represented. Let us apply the simile to the illustration of the object under consideration. As a sinful man I owe the divine law satisfaction for my offences against it, which satisfaction I never can make. Jesus offers me his perfect satisfaction, his perfect righteousness, which I receive by faith and plead at the tribunal of God; now this is the very righteousness of the law, which God has declared he will accept; I am, therefore, legally acquitted—a just God, justifies me who believe in his son. By faith I have the perfect righteousness of the law.—But have I any glory in this transaction? Oh no! my Lord made the satisfaction and wrought out the righteousness himself, I did nothing, I could do nothing in the business. But I will love and praise him to all eternity, as my most generous benefactor. Thus much in reference to the justifying righteousness of Jesus, received by faith, and accepted by a just God, as the ground of my pardon and title to life; a subject so intimately connected with my main design, that I hope its introduction in this place, will be thought a pardonable digression.

Again the divine law demands of me a personal righteousness, which I am totally unable to furnish. My generous friend interposes in my behalf again. He bestows on me his spirit, he puts his Bible into my hand, opens up the wells of salvation in gospel

ordinances, gives his angels charge concerning me, intercedes with his heavenly father for me; and at last brings me to the judgment seat, perfect in personal holiness, to meet my trial. The law demands a perfect personal righteousness, and I furnish it. My heart is pure, my hands are clean, the law can find no flaw in me; I am therefore pronounced an upright subject of the law, and justice decrees me the reward, which it had promised to obedience. But to whom is all the glory due! To him who wrought all this righteousness in me. He plowed up the fallow ground of my heart, he sowed the good seed, he watered it daily, he watched it night and day, he purged away the chaff and stubble, and has brought the wheat into his garner. I could not, and would not, have done any of these things, he has done them all, and his be all the praise.

This is unquestionably the representation of these subjects, which is afforded us in the Holy Scriptures; but as I do not wish to leave any proposition on this momentous theme, without direct scriptural proof, I shall quote a single text on the occasion.

"Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!"* Jesus loved us, and therefore undertook for us; he washed us from our sins in his own blood, and thereby obtained our justification with God; and made us kings and priests to God and his Father, consecrating and qualifying us for the holy service of God; therefore to him be all the glory, and all

* Rev. i. 5, 6.

dominion over us, and the whole universe, to all eternity. The Scriptures are full of such ascriptions of the glory of our salvation to the Son of God.

I have dwelt too long on this subject, yet I cannot dismiss it without briefly hinting at a distinction, which it not always sufficiently attended to.

The worth and value of the personal righteousness of the saints is one thing.—Their personal merit is another.

I have now finished my comparison of the original law of works and the remedial law of grace. I have, I conceive, fully made out my doctrine, that in the original law man was placed under a double responsibility, which, for distinction sake, I name representative responsibility, and personal responsibility. I have also as fully made out my doctrine, that the remedial law covers the whole ground of the original law; the mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ received by faith being capable of affecting all the purposes of the representative righteousness of Adam; and the personal righteousness which he produces in all true believers, being capable of effecting all that could have been effected by the personal righteousness of men, had they stood in purity. These views of the human condition I derived from the Holy Scriptures, and from them alone; and therefore I place a confidence in them, and assign a value to them; which I would not do were they merely sanctioned by all the decrees of all the councils, and by all the dictums of all the doctors, since the days of the apostles. My reader will judge for himself—ONLY; even as I judge for myself—ONLY: and God will judge us both.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ERRONEOUS SYSTEMS OF THEOLOGY, WHICH HAVE ORIGINATED FROM CONSIDERING THE LAW OF WORKS AND THE LAW OF GRACE, TO BE DISTINCT ORIGINAL INSTITUTIONS.

THIS chapter is devoted to the brief exposure of some dangerous errors in theology, which have originated from ignorance of the nature of the original law of works, and of the remedial law of grace; and particularly from ignorance that the latter takes in the whole compass of the former, and meets every demand of that law, each in its own specific form.

1. ANTINOMIANISM sprung from this cause. Luther, who held the necessity of a personal righteousness, as well as of imputed righteousness, to salvation; and who called the former the active, the latter the passive righteousness; in his just zeal to hold up the latter as the sole ground of justification, has used some strong and harsh expressions against the law. His sole object was to deter sinners from expecting justification before God on account of their personal obedience to the law; in which he did no more than support the apostle's doctrine that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, for by the law is the knowledge of sin"—but that "men are justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Luther having

excluded human righteousness in the article of *justification*, one of his disciples, a John Agricola, generalised the doctrine, and excluded human righteousness altogether in the salvation of sinners, and declaimed against the law, as unfit to be inculcated as a rule of manners, or used in the church as a means of instruction. Luther enraged to find his doctrine so enormously corrupted, wrote against him with his usual fervour and severity. The antinomians flourished considerably in England during the time of Cromwell. It is not to be inferred, however, that they adopted this system for the purpose of justifying vicious indulgences. Dr. Crisp and others of them, were men of exemplary piety and sanctity of manners. The truth is their monstrous system, was the result of a metaphysical speculation. They did not perceive the distinct necessity of faith in the righteousness of Christ for justification; and a personal conformity to the law: they did not distinguish in the original law the *personal* from the *representative* responsibility of man; nor in the remedial law did they distinguish the necessity of Christ's righteousness for justification, and a personal righteousness to qualify a man for entering into life. In speculating too curiously on one truth, they incautiously abandoned another. The piety and holiness of their lives, compared with the gross immorality of their doctrines, show us how little metaphysical subtleties have to do with the purity of religious character. The grace of God had secured them against the influence of their own immoral creed. Others however who were not thus protected, doubtless took the free advantage of this licentious creed, to work iniquity with greediness. It is remarkable that those persons who are little acquainted with calvinistic doctrine, or

who are disposed to cavil, are apt to ascribe to the doctrine of imputed righteousness an antinomian tendency, as if it annulled, or weakened the obligations to personal holiness. No allegation can be more unfounded. The calvinistic, that is, I mean, the christian doctrine, is that holiness is absolutely necessary to an entrance into heaven, and that the reward will be exactly proportioned to the amount of the works of righteousness produced. But then the same doctrine teaches, that the first step to holiness is reconciliation to God by the death of his Son, without which we can neither love nor obey him.

2. Legality, or a dependance on self-righteousness springs exactly from the same mistake; only argued in a different direction. The legalist has fully before his eyes the personal responsibility of man, the necessity of personal holiness, and the indissoluble connection between virtue and its reward. Hence he concludes that imputed righteousness is useless, and in effect that it weakens the motives to holiness, or rather renders personal righteousness altogether unnecessary. But here he commits several mistakes: He supposes that imputed righteousness, and personal righteousness are intended to occupy the same place, and to serve the same end; and that hence, if the one be in that place, the other must be excluded; and that if the one answer the end, the other must of consequence be superfluous. This hypothesis is altogether gratuitous and false. Imputed righteousness, and personal righteousness, do not occupy the same place; they do not answer the same ends in the system of salvation. Both are needed, neither can stand without the other, *utrumque per se indigens alterum alterius auxilio eget?* His second

error is, that a personal righteousness may be obtained without faith in the righteousness of Jesus. This is not true. Sinners must be reconciled to God by the blood of Christ's cross, before they can either love or obey him. So long as they are unreconciled, they must either not think of God at all, or think of him erroneously, or view him as an omniscient enemy, impelled to punish them by all the moral attributes of his nature. It is plainly impossible to love God on the latter supposition, and without love there can be no holiness, for love is the fulfilling of the law; and on the two foregoing suppositions holiness is equally impossible, because ignorance of God, or erroneous conceptions of him, never can lead to a reasonable service. The Scriptures afford a truly rational view of real religion. The sacred writers (though only three of them had any pretensions to the name of philosopher,) are the only writers on religion and morals, who seem to have understood human nature; and I confess, it is to me ONE decisive proof of their inspiration, that their system does not contain one single absurdity. But I must not dilate.

3. Endless and fretting controversies between Calvinists and Arminians have originated from the same cause: Some Calvinists insisting strongly on the value of imputed righteousness in the article of justification; and some Arminians insisting strongly on the value and necessity of good works in regard to sanctification. So far they are both right. And there are no doubt temperate and candid men in both parties, who perceive that in these views there is nothing inconsistent. That such candid men exist among the Calvinists, I can assert from personal knowledge through a considerable course of years;

and it costs me nothing to believe, as I do believe, that there are men equally candid among the Arminians; though my limited acquaintance with that sect, would put it out of my power to quote as many examples, as I could quote in respect to the other. The grand difference between these two sects is this, the Calvinist has a clear perception of the representative responsibility of man—the Arminian has a clear perception of his personal responsibility; and both are right so long as they confine themselves to affirmative doctrine in their respective districts; but when either of them comes out with negative doctrine against the other, let the reader look sharp!

The cure of this particular schism consists in each party's taking into view the whole field—that is the representative and the personal responsibility of man. If any thing can be ascertained from the Scriptures these two things may: 1. That by the sin of one man, sin and death came upon all mankind. I do not recollect ever to have heard or read a christian man disputing this point. But the metaphysic of the fact—Aye, that has given great turmoil! 2. No christian man ever denied that the believer's sins are pardoned for the sake of Christ, who obeyed and suffered under the law, in order to reconcile God to man, and man to God. I am sure, I never yet heard an Arminian declare, that he expected pardon any other way, than through the satisfaction made to divine justice by the Son of God; no, not one of them have I ever heard utter his sentiments, who would not spurn, and who did not spurn, the idea of atoning for his sins, by any good action of his own. But when you come to the metaphysics, then the parties get into a war of words. The Arminian is afraid to admit that the obedience

of Jesus has any thing to do with the believer's justification, least he should set aside the necessity of personal holiness: the Calvinist is afraid to allow that good works are worth any thing, least he should infringe upon the honour of Christ's righteousness. The Arminian declares against imputed righteousness, while the sufferings of Jesus are his darling theme. The Calvinist is so much afraid of legality, that he will hardly speak out, and let us know whether he believes that there is any connection in strict justice between the personal righteousness of the saints, and its heavenly reward. Hence we sometimes see the two parties quitting the middle of the highway of truth leading to heaven; one walking in the gutter in the one side, and the other in the parallel gutter on the opposite side; each eyeing the other askance with terror; the Calvinist afraid of nothing so much as least he should be, or be thought, an Arminian; and the Arminian scarcely less afraid of Calvinism than of perdition. I feel strongly tempted to lash this pruriency of metaphysical debate, with all the scourges of all the furies. But like Brutus and his spectre, perhaps, we meet again at Phillippi.

4. From not perceiving that christianity is merely a remedial system, founded upon an antecedent constitution, has sprung the modern theory, that the merit of Christ's righteousness is exactly equal to the demerit of the sins of the elect. I shall endeavour before I have done to ascertain the date, and the causes of this most unscriptural, most unphilosophical, and most absurd of all possible systems. At present I shall say only this much: that admitting the truth of the hypothesis, the covenant of grace, (as it is called) would not be a remedial system at all.

You might call it AN ACT FOR THE RELIEF OF A, B, C, and then no man whose name was not ingrossed in the act, could possibly have any concern with it. And if Jesus Christ is the trustee in that act of incorporation, then his authority must extend over a, b, c, and the others therein mentioned, and cannot possibly extend farther. He is then totally limited to the elect. He cannot offer salvation to any other, he cannot command any other to obey him. How very different is the scriptural doctrine. Jesus Christ offers salvation to all—gives his commands to all—rewards the obedient, and punishes the rebellious!

5. From the same want of a perception of the remedial nature of Christ's work has arisen the system, "that the elect are justified before they are converted, nay before they are born, nay from all eternity." My reader will cry this is too absurd! You must be stating things with exaggeration! No, gentle reader, the fear of God is upon my heart, and I would not knowingly exaggerate or diminish any thing, for the planet on which I breathe. I will therefore on this subject give thee the sentiments, *ipsissimis verbis*, of a very able man, a professor in a university of the highest character in his, or any other country—"Even when the elect are unconverted, they are actually justified, and freed from all sin by the death of Christ, and God so deems of them as free; and having accepted of that satisfaction is actually reconciled to them. By this justification we are freed from the guilt of our sins, and because that is taken away, God in due time proceeds to give us the grace of sanctification, to free us from sin's corruption, inherent in our nature." Again speaking of elect infants he says: "They are

clear of the guilt of original sin by the death of Christ, which God hath accepted to their perfect justification long before they were born."—In speaking of faith and conversion he says, "we are then justified *in foro conscientiæ*, which is but the revelation and certain declaration of God's former act of accepting Christ's righteousness to our justification."

It it apparent, that this author considered the convenant of grace not as a remedial system, but as an original institute; hence he considered the elect as the only persons any way interested in it. He imagines, that the covenant is an instrument perfectly analogous to the covenant of works; and that as Adam's guilt is charged against all his posterity, and personally imputed so soon as they personally exist, so also is the righteousness of Jesus charged to the account of the elect, and personally imputed to them the moment they personally exist; and that they are pardoned, justified and accepted, because Christ paid down their debt; and that this sentence of justification took place even when they were in unbelief and rebellion. How contrary to the Scripture all this is, the man who reads the Scripture knows! Perhaps also the philosophers may think it somewhat unphilosophical.

The doctrine of this system is essentially the same with that of the last mentioned; and however unscriptural, and absurd the conclusions of this fifth system may be thought, and really are; I do not hesitate to assert that the logic is correct; whereas the logic of the fourth system, in relation to the date of justification is absolutely sophistical. Both systems are however erroneous, and their com-

mon cure is to forswear metaphysics and read the Bible.

The instances, which have been mentioned are sufficient for my purpose, which is to point out the injurious consequences of considering the convenants of works and grace as two distinct systems; those who are well versed in these studies, may easily add other theological systems to those which have been noticed. With respect to the formation of theological and moral theories, it is certainly a business which not one man in a million was made for; fond as we all are,—foolishly fond as we all are of it, we show that we are engaged in work, which God never prescribed to us, because we constantly spoil it. The sophists of Greece theorised their countrymen out of many foolish and culpable superstitions, but they also theorised them out of their traditionary morality, their traditionary belief in providence, their traditionary hope of a future state of rewards and punishments; they delivered them from the absurdities of polytheism, but it was by plunging them into the worse absurdities of atheism. And what have our christian sophists done? They have systematized, and argued away, till they have argued us out of our Christ! and when they have so barricadoed us, that we can have no access to him, they call the fiction christianity, which by its true name is antichristianity.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY WHICH MAN HAS BEEN MAKING, BY ATTEMPTING TO MERGE REPRESENTATIVE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY INTO ONE, AND TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE OF GOD TO OUR FAMILY, ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ALONE.—THE THEORY OF OUR SUBSTANTIAL IDENTIFICATION WITH ADAM EXAMINED AND REFUTED.

I CANNOT but think, that we have already demonstrated beyond controversy, and beyond a doubt, that, in the original law of works, man was placed under a representative responsibility, and under a personal responsibility; and I think also, that it has been demonstrated, with equal evidence, that the mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ answers to the believer, the same purpose which the righteousness of Adam would have answered to his posterity; while the righteousness, wrought out by him, in the hearts of believers, serves the same purposes, in the judgment day, as the personal righteousness of Adam's posterity would have served, had they maintained their integrity. Hence, as the representative character of Adam entailed guilt and death upon mankind, so the remedial righteousness of Christ is capable of

entailing upon them all justification and life; and actually does entail those blessings upon all who believe in him. And again, as the personal righteousness of each individual man would have received its just and proportioned reward, as promised in the law; so the personal righteousness of the saints will receive its just and proportioned reward, according to the faithful promise of the same law. That these facts are as clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that they are as frequently repeated, that they are as variously illustrated, that they are as earnestly inculcated, and forced home on the understanding, heart and conscience of man, as any other scriptural facts whatever, I do fearlessly assert. But if my attempt to prove these facts, should not carry instantaneous conviction to the minds of some of my readers, I request such to read the Bible over; and I am sure, that before they have finished that delightful task, my lack of service will have been more than compensated.

Leaving that subject, then, safe and secure from all possible refutation; though perhaps not beyond the reach of contradiction; I am now going to plunge into the unfathomable abyss of philosophy—of philosophy falsely so called—the darkening of counsel by words without knowledge—the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God. If I were to assert, however, that the advocates of this philosophy, which I must censure, were, or are, weak or illiterate men, I should sin against the truth; and not only forfeit all claim to public attention, but what is infinitely worse, I should forfeit all claim to conscious self-respect; and worse than all, I should have to endure the rebuke of him whose impartial eye estimates with justice the merits and the demerits of all his

creatures. For I could name, among the abettors of this false philosophy, diamonds of the first water; men to whom God had given the highest human genius, whose learning was prodigious, their piety unquestioned, and their integrity beyond all challenge. Be it remembered then, that to refute a man's error, is not to call him a fool; and that to smile at the follies of the wise, is perfectly consistent with the profoundest veneration for their wisdom. Philosophers may account for the fact as they please, but the simplest of us all know it to be a fact, that we are never much enraptured with the tame unerring thinker, who never dares beyond the broken path. But when the inspired son of genius stretches his daring pinion to explore unknown regions, and open up new habitations for the extension and improvement of his race, our hearts and our enthusiasm go along with him; and we easily pardon his mistakes and errors; because we know that he incurred them in the cause of God and of man.

But I proceed to my subject. Satan hates nothing so much as the gospel, the pure simple doctrine of faith; because it is the destruction of his kingdom; the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for the salvation of men. His policy, therefore, as a politician of awful and tremendous powers of calculation, is to render men dissatisfied with plain gospel truth. We know the devil by his children; for the works of their father they do. And we know, that whenever they are pressed on the subject of duty, they demur, and demand a reason. It is the grand effort of Satan, as of all his sons, when a duty is enjoined, to start a problem! and, if possible, an insolvable problem! And while people are puzzling their brains about the solution of the problem, life ebbs away, and

the sinner dies in his sins. Ministers of the gospel, oftentimes think, that, because they are appointed to be the instructors of the world, they ought to solve all these satanic problems. Hence, by their own consent, the devil carries them up aloft in the whirlwind of speculation, till all are bewildered, and some of them cast down into utter darkness for ever.

The philosophical question which he has started on the subject now before us, is this—"What is the *principle of identification*, between Adam and his posterity in the law of works?—And, what is the *principle of identification* between Christ and believers? That the sentence of death falls upon the human family as one body corporate in law; and that justification is pronounced upon Jesus, and all believers, as one body corporate in law; is sufficiently apparent from the Scriptures. And the problem which has been suggested, is this—What is the principle of *identification?*

I have ascribed this philosophical problem to the invention of the devil; because it bears the triple brand with which he marks all his inventions. 1. If the problem was solved, the solution could be applied to no useful purpose whatever. 2. It is incapable of being solved. 3. In seeking a solution, we are in infinite danger of falling into some error, and denying some revealed truth. If I know the fact, that mankind are brought into a state of sin and death by Adam's sin, what wiser would I be though I knew the *reason* of that fact, and the mode and manner of its occurrence. Would the knowledge of that *reason* prevent my doom? Would it render death less horrible? Would it point out any mode of deliverance? No, nothing of all this. It would be a useless, fruit-

less discovery! On the other hand, if I am a believer, bound up in the bundle of life with Jesus, what would I be the wiser or the better, though I knew the reason why God identifies me with his Son, and had a thorough conception of the nature, mode and manner of our union? Would this knowledge excite my love and obedience, more than a simple knowledge of the fact does? It could have no such influence! As this question, on the one hand, could answer no valuable purpose, even if it were solved; so, on the other hand, it is absolutely incapable of solution. This assertion will need no proof to those, who are in the habit of tracing the boundaries which limit the ultimate progress of human investigation: such will recognise at once, the representative character of Adam, as an ultimate fact, incapable of being referred to any more general fact known to us. The experience of mankind may safely be appealed to on this subject: it can be shown, that they have been speculating on this subject with all their acumen, during the last fifteen hundred years, and, perhaps, since the beginning of the world, and yet no man of sound understanding will pretend, that a single ray of light has been cast upon it by all their speculations, but that it now is, what it always has been, a simple naked fact. Solomon certainly exerted his utmost powers of mind to solve this, among some other moral problems, and he tells us that "this only had he found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions."* And if he was modest enough to rest satisfied with a naked fact, without explanation or theory, we may do so too: and, perhaps, those who resemble him most, will be the first to imitate his discretion. But

* Eccles. vii. 29.

the great evil of speculating on the present subject is this—that perhaps no man ever has attempted to pursue his inquiries beyond the mere fact, without falling into error; and there is ground to fear, that no man ever will attempt it without injury to truth. When you get *ultra flammantia mœnia mundi*, all is conjecture and hypothesis; and there is infinity to one, that the conjecture and hypothesis will be wrong. How many have there been, and how many are there at this moment, who, in speculating after a reason why Adam's sin should plunge us into misery and death, have brought themselves to the conclusion, that Adam's posterity have nothing to do with his sin; that it could not, and that, in fact, it ought not, to subject them to any misery! Contrary to the Scriptures—contrary to the fact. And again, how many are there who deny that the imputed righteousness of Christ can do us any good! Thus, cutting off our only hope of eternal life. There are few subjects in the Bible which have been more obnoxious to human pride, or more exposed to opposition, than imputed sin, and imputed righteousness. Many reject the Scriptures entirely, because they teach these doctrines. Others assert that these doctrines are not taught in the Scriptures at all; and are at great pains to relieve the sacred volume from the stigma of countenancing them; for they seem to think these doctrines so absurd and iniquitous, that they would be sufficient to discredit any system, of which they composed a part. And last of all, there have been some who have set about explaining the doctrine of imputation, in such a manner, (amounting in effect to a denial of it,) as appeared to them to remove or obviate all the objections brought against it.

These speculatists seem to have thought that it was both just and equitable in God, to punish sinners for their own personal sins; and to reward the righteous for their personal virtues; they have accordingly invented an hypothesis, which is to identify mankind, with the person of Adam; and which is to identify believers with the person of Christ, in such a manner, that the condemnation of the sinner in the one case, and the justification of the believer in the other, may flow in the channel of personal responsibility. They have been led away by the figurative language of Scripture, founded upon the animal relations of mankind, to image a *substantial identification* of all men with the person of Adam; and a *substantial identification* of all believers with the person of Jesus Christ. We existed in Adam, say they, we were a part of his subsistance; we ate the forbidden fruit in Adam, and were condemned for that sin, because it is in fact our own sin. And again by literally interpretting the figures, which represent believers as being one with Christ, members of his body of blood, and of his bones; these speculators represent them as partaking in the benefits of his redemption, because they are *substantially* one with him, and in fact nothing more than Christ evolved. It is this system of *substantial identification* which I call,

THE WORLD WHICH MAN HAS BEEN MAKING, and which with his usual skill and good fortune, he has contrived to locate exactly between our world, and the Son of righteousness; whence it sheds back on us the portentous brazen of a perpetual eclipse, alarming us with no vain fears of hideous revolutions. This dark chaotic sphere is intended to be a

world of rational theology, where man will walk by sight and not by faith; after he shall have reduced the doctrine of representative responsibility to that of personal responsibility, and simplified all the mysteries of our religion. Whatever may be the merit or demerit of this system, it must be kept in mind, that the present age incurs no blame, and are entitled to no praise for its invention. It is in fact a very old system, covered over with the awful hoar of many a century. It can be traced up to the corruptions of christianity, occasioned by the introduction of the Greek philosophy into evangelical speculation by the theological school of Alexandria. It has been somewhat unfortunate, that those who have opposed this hypothesis, should at the same time have denied the doctrines of imputed sin and imputed righteousness. I believe these doctrines, and shall impugn the hypothesis notwithstanding.

It would be endless to attempt numbering the treatises, which have been written in proof or illustration of the theory in question. I shall select the very best of all that have come to my knowledge. It is in fact the most ingenious and imposing, and the only complete and consistent display of the system, which I know of, so far as relates to the identification of mankind with Adam. It was written about the middle of the last century by a man of great genius, considerable learning, and uncommon eloquence. He was a man also who wore laurels which genius, learning, and eloquence, never can bestow. He was a model of pure and simple christian piety, and of ardent well tempered zeal in the cause of human salvation; meek and humble, laborious and indefatigable; he was a friend to the poor,

eyes to the blind, and legs to the lame; he lived in uncommon purity, and died in uncommon triumph, filled with all the fulness of God—whose name I would mention for glory, were I quoting some of his half-inspired, and inspiring pages, in which he administers the consolations of the gospel to broken hearts, and wounded consciences. But I hold it to be ungenerous to the worthy dead, to associate his name with what I conceive to be a shadowy unsubstantial vision of the mind. Lest however, my reader should happen to be in possession of my secret, I beg leave to say that I differ from that author in several points of real magnitude. His fine etherial genius exposed him to the fascinations of philosophical theory, the resources of his ingenuity were such as to furnish him with some plausible means of escape in the most pressing difficulties; and even when most notoriously wrong, he charms us with his originality and eloquence—*dulcissime vanus.* The following are my quotations.

"Adam contained in himself, as in miniature, all his posterity. The various nations of men are nothing, but different branches growing from the original root. They are *Adam*, or *man*, existing at large; as the branches of a spreading oak, with all the acorns, which have grown upon them, and dropped from them, during a long succession of summers, are nothing but the original acorn, unfolding and multiplying itself with all its essential properties. It is then as ridiculous to wonder, that the sons of depraved Adam should naturally be depraved, as that an acorn should naturally produce an oak, and a poisonous root a malignant plant." Again.

"Adam was the general head, representative, and father of mankind, and we suffer from his rebellion, *legally*, as the children of those who have sold themselves for slaves, are born in a state of wretched slavery; and as the descendants of a noble traitor lose the title by their ancestor's crime: *naturally*, as the sons of a bankrupt suffer poverty for their ancestor's extravagance; or as Gehazi's leprosy clave to him and his seed for ever: and, *unavoidably*, as an unborn child shares the fate of its unhappy mother, when she inadvertently poisons, or desperately stabs herself." Again, "we may therefore conclude that a moral depravity, which comes upon us by the wilful choice of a parent in whom we *seminally* and *federatively* existed—a depravity which cleaves to us by the obstinate neglect of the infinitely precious means provided to remove it—a depravity which works now by our own personal choice, to which we daily give our assent by the free commission of sins which are avoidable, leaves us not only accountable but inexcusable before God.

"However the advocates for the natural purity of the human race (endeavouring to clog with difficulties, what they cannot disprove to be matter of fact) still assert 'as we have our souls immediately from God, if we are born sinful, he must either create sinful souls, which cannot be supposed without impiety, or send sinless souls into sinful bodies to be defiled by the unhappy union, which is as inconsistent with his goodness as with his justice.' Add to this, say the objectors, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than to suppose that a body, a mere lump of organized matter, is able to communicate to a pure spirit that moral pollution, of which itself is as incapable as the murderous sword is incapable of cruelty.

"This specious objection, which Dr. Watts acknowledges to be '*the very chief point of difficulty, in all the controversy about original sin,*' is wholly founded upon the vulgar notion, that we have our souls immediately from God by infusion: it will therefore entirely fall to the ground, if we can prove that we receive them, as well as our bodies, by traduction from Adam; and that this fact appears, if I am not mistaken, from the following arguments.

"1. We have no reason from Scripture or reason to think that adulterers can, when they please, put God upon creating new souls to animate the spurious fruit of their crime. On the contrary, it is said, that God rested on the seventh day from all his work of creation.

"2. Eve herself was not created, but in Adam; God breathed no breath of life into her, as he did into her husband to make him a living soul. Therefore when Adam saw her, he said, she shall be called woman, because she (her whole self, not her body only) was taken out of man. If then the soul of the first woman sprung out of Adam's, as her body from his body, what reason have we to believe that the souls of her posterity are immediately infused, as Adam's was when God created him.

"3. All agree that under God we receive *life* from our parents; and if *life*, then certainly our soul, which is the principle of life.

"4. Other animals have the power of propagating their own species *after its kind;* they can generate animated bodies; why should man be but half a father? when did God stint him to propagate the mere shell of his person, the body without the soul? was it when he blessed him and said unto him be fruitful and multiply?

when he spoke this, did he not address himself to the soul as well as to the body? Can the body itself either understand or execute a command? Is it not on the contrary highly reasonable to conclude, that by virtue of the divine appointment and blessing, the whole man can be fruitful and multiply; and that the soul under proper circumstances, can generate a soul, as a thought begets a thought; and can kindle the flame of life, as one taper lights another, without weakening its immortal substance, any more than that God the Father (if I may be allowed the comparison) imparted the divine essence, by the eternal generation of his only begotten Son.

"5. Does not matter of fact corroborate the above reasoning? A sprightly race horse generally begets a mettlesome colt; while a heavy cart-horse begets a colt, that bears the stamp of its sire's dullness. And is it not so with mankind in general? The children of the Hottentots and Esquimaux are commonly as stupid, while those of the English and French are usually as sharp, as their parents. You seldom see a wit springing from two half-witted people, or a fool descended from very sensible parents. The children of men of genius are frequently as remarkable for some branch of hereditary genius; as those of blockheads are, for their native stupidity. Nothing is more common than to see very flighty and passionate parents, have very flighty and passionate children. And I have an hundred times discovered, not only the features, look and complexion of a father, or a mother in a child's face; but seen a congenial soul looking out (if I may so speak) at those windows of the body, which we call the eyes. Hence I conclude that the advice frequently given to those who are about to choose a partner for life 'take

care of the breed,' is not absolutely without foundation; although some lay too much stress on it, forgetting that a thousand, and unknown accidents, may form exceptions to the general rule; and not considering that the peculiarity of the father's breed, may be happily corrected by that of the mother, and *vice versa;* and that as the grace of God yielded to, may sweeten the worst temper, so sin persisted in may sour the best.

"6. Again Moses informs us that fallen Adam begat a son in his own likeness and after his image; but had he generated a body without a soul, he would not have begotten a son in his own likeness, since he was not a mere mortal body, but a fallen embodied spirit. Compare Gen. v. 3. with xlvi. 26.

"But upon this scheme, will objectors say, if Adam was converted when he begat a son, he begat a converted soul.* This does by no means follow;† for is he was born of God after his fall, it was by grace through faith, and not by nature through generation; he could not communicate his spiritual generation, by natural generation, any more than a great scholar can propagate his learning together with his species.‡

"Should it be again objected, that the soul is not generated, because the Scriptures declare, that 'the Lord is the father of spirits of all flesh,' and the 'spirit returns to God who gave it,' I answer, it is also written

* A pretty tough objection perhaps.

† Why not? If moral qualities are generated. If a pure man would beget a pure soul, a sinful man a sinful soul; then a converted man, who is partly pur and partly vile, should beget a soul of mixed character like his own; otherwise like does not beget like.

‡ This is evasive. Were we not told that a man of genius propagates his genius. Why might not the renewed man communicate the moral bias of hi nature. And then the child of the latter would be capable of becoming a holy man, as the child of the former might become learned.

that Job and David were fearfully and wonderfully fashioned by God in the womb, that he formed Jeremiah in the belly; and that we are all the offspring of him who made of one blood all nations of men. Now if the latter Scriptures do not exclude the interposition of parents, by what rule of criticism in divinity can we prove, that the former exclude that interposition, in the production of their souls.

"Nor can materialists, who have no ideas of generation, but such as are gross and carnal, like their own system, with any shadow of reason infer, that if the soul be generated with the body, it will also perish with it. For dissolution is so far from being a consequence of the spiritual generation of our souls, that it would not have followed the generation of our bodies, if Adam had not brought sin into the world, and death by sin. Again, if wheat is a material seed, which grows out of the same earthly clod with the chaff, that incloses it, can subsist unimpaired when the mean cover is destroyed; how much more can the soul (that spiritual, vital, heavenly power, which is by nature so vastly superior to the body in which it is formed,) continue to exist, when flesh and blood are turned to their native dust.

"Should some persons reject what I say of the traduction of souls, in order to illustrate the derivation of original sin; and should say that they have no more idea of the generation, than honest Nicodemus had of the regeneration of a spirit, I beg leave to observe two things.

"1. If such objectors are converted, they will not deny the regeneration of souls by the spirit of God, since they experience it, and our Lord speaks of it as a blessed reality, even when he speaks of it as a

mystery unknown as to the manner of it; John iii. 8—13. Now if pious souls have been regenerated from the beginning of the world, without exactly knowing how, is it reasonable to deny that souls are generated, merely because we cannot account for the manner in which that wonder takes place.*

"2. Should my objectors be versed in natural phisophy, they need not be told, that even the kind of gravitation, which they allow, is as much a mystery to man, as the movements of a watch is to a child, who just sees the case and the glass. If they will not believe me, let them believe him who 'gave his heart to search out by wisdom all things that are done under heaven;' and who touching upon our question: 'as thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all things.† Eccles. xi. 5.

"For my part I do not see why the same almighty preserver of men, who (as St. Paul tells us) made of one blood the bodies of all nations of men, might not of one ACTIVE THOUGHT and ARDENT DESIRE have made the souls of all nations of men. Have not thought and desire as great affinity to the nature of the soul, as blood has to that of the body; and consequently are not our ideas of the traduction of the

* The reasoning here is quite sophistical. The regenerated man is conscious of having undergone a change of heart, and God tells him it is the work of his Spirit, but does not explain the manner of his operation. I am conscious of mental operations which assure me I have a soul, and I know that God gave it to me—but do I know any thing about the manner of its creation?

† An admirable quotation! But if we do not know how these things are, why should we make theories to show how they are! That God gives man a soul, we know, how he gives it we know not; that original sin descends to men we know, how it descends we know not! But we manufacture theories out of our ignorance; we first confess ourselves perfectly ignorant of a subject, and then set to with all our might to explain it!

soul as clear as those which we can form of the generation of the body.

"Having dwelt so long on the manner in which mankind naturally propagate original corruption, together with their whole species, I hope I may reasonably resume the conclusion of my argument, and affirm that if Adam corrupted the fountain of human nature in himself, we, the streams, cannot but be naturally corrupted."

I have omitted a few pages of the original for brevity's sake; what I have quoted exhibits I conceive the theory in its full dimensions. There certainly never was any thing more gratuitously hypothetical, for I cannot imagine that the verbage, and analogies, brought forward, amount to any proof of the hypothetical fact, that our souls are generated as well as our bodies. I am, however, not at all interested in the truth or falsehood of that hypothesis; because admitting it to be true, it does not remove a single difficulty respecting original sin, it does not even approximate towards a solution of any of those difficulties. My business, therefore, is to show that even were this hypothesis true, it is barren of consequences in regard to every question respecting original sin.

1. It appears that Dr. Watts and the ingenious author quoted, harmonised on the doctrine of original sin; they both believed than men are born depraved, and subject to the divine displeasure: and they both admitted the necessity of regeneration, and of pardon through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, in order to the attainment of eternal life. In the doctrine of faith they are agreed without a shadow of difference. About what then do they disagree?

About the PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY! How does Adam's sin descend to his posterity? It is this philosophical question which splits them. A question of no possible use if it were solved, and therefore insolvable by man! Dr. Watts had adopted a very common theory, that our souls are immediately created by God, but when he came to speculate on the manner of the transmission of original sin from Adam to his posterity, his philosophy involved him in inextricable toils. If God, says he, created wicked spirits, he himself is the cause of the evil; if the soul was pure, how could it corrupt the body? and how could the body, which without the soul possesses no moral attribute, corrupt it by its union? This certainly is one of the great dismal swamps of philosophical christianity. Our author could not give the doctor any assistance: and so he adopts a different theory, and asserts that soul and body both are generated; but how far this will aid in solving the problem, we shall inquire hereafter.

What were these good and wise men about? Arguing about christianity? Not at all. In the doctrine of christianity, the doctrines revealed by God as the objects of human faith, they are of one mind and of one heart. It is a philosophical problem about which they differ and dispute. *Cui bono?* If that problem were solved would it do christians any good? No! It will be said: but there are in the world a number of captious quibblers, who make objections against the Scripture doctrine, who must be either convinced or silenced! Well, then, tell me truly: since the fall of man, was any one of these speculatists or gainsayers, either silenced or convinced by such speculation? Never. But they are glory-

ing in their own ingenuity, and in your confusion, and hardening themselves in their disposition to view christianity as an absurd and useless system. The only mode of treating with such characters, is to appeal to the great moral fact that our world is drowned and overwhelmed with vice, and that in so many nations, and through so many ages, it has not produced a single perfect human character, though it has produced thousands, so wicked, that nothing in human shape can be imagined worse. Tell them that the Scriptures ascribe this general effect to a general cause, the rebellion of Adam, our representative under the original law. If they reject this simple account of the matter, let them alone! Do not attempt to explain what you do not understand, words without ideas never convinced any man. It is neither faith nor philosophy to pretend to believe without evidence. And I do believe, that metaphysical sermons and dissertations on the mode in which original sin is transmitted to mankind, have been the immediate cause of bringing the fact of its transmission into question, and even of occasioning the denial of Scripture doctrine on the subject.

I believe the remark of Mr. Locke is very applicable in the present case, and many others respecting the philosophy of christianity. "But, notwithstanding the great noise is made in the world about errors and opinions, I must do mankind the right as to say, there are not so many men in errors and wrong opinions, as is commonly supposed. Not that I think they embrace the truth; but indeed, because that concerning those doctrines they keep such a stir about, they have no thought, no opinion at all."*

* Essay on Hum. Und. Book iv. chapter 20.

2. Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird. Our ingenious author, seeing Dr. Watts and others in great troubles by their theory; boldly adopts the theory *ex traduce*, namely, that both our souls and our bodies are generated, in order to account rationally for the transmission of original sin. I say, he adopted this theory, for he is by no means the author of it; it is so old, and may be met with so far back in history, that I have never heard date or author assigned to it. And I must do it the justice to say, that of all the systems which have traced our moral interest in Adam, to any substantial connection with his person, this is the only one that is complete: For this makes us in every view a substantial piece of Adam, not only bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; but soul of his soul. It is, after all, worth nothing; and when it has amused us with a profuse and imposing exhibition of sounds, and figures, and analogies, and conclusions, it leaves us without one ascertained fact; or one conclusion drawn on any known principle of moral logic. If the reader has time to speculate for liberal amusement, let him come along; if not, let him skip over the remainder of this chapter. To proceed, let us in our following discussion, take up the subject so as to include both the foregoing theories.

We seem to think, that we speak a language perfectly perspicuous, and utter a sentiment self-evident, when we say that we have derived our being from Adam, and that his blood runs in our veins. If we mean nothing more, than that Adam is the most remote in the series of human parentage, and that from him down to us has been continued, that chain of human dependencies and relations, by which man-

kind are bound together as parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends, neighbours and fellow citizens; from which relationship spring the duties, virtues, charities, and enjoyments of our social nature; no objection can be made to the sentiment. God has made of one blood all the nations of men, who dwell on the face of the earth, and has established their moral relations, for their mutual improvement in knowledge and virtue, and for the promotion of their happiness.

But if instead of this moral view of the descent of our race from Adam, we take a mere *physiological* view of it, and insist that the same identical particles of matter, which existed in Adam, exist in us, and that therefore we are connected with him, and his other descendant, in moral relations; we advance a doctrine not only absolutely incapable of proof, but in my judgment nearly, if not altogether, incredible; and we deduce a moral consequence from it, which cannot be deduced on any known principle of logic.

1. How do we know, by what possible means shall we ascertain, that there is in our bodies a single particle of matter, that ever entered into the composition of the body of Adam? We can investigate this question only on the principles of physiology; and upon the ascertained principles of animal physiology, no man of forty years of age can assert, that there is in his body a particle of matter, which belonged to him at the day of his birth: the high probability is, that not one such particle remains with him. The cuticle which covers and defends us from the atmosphere, is in a constant state of change. The fluids which circulate in our

bodies are still more evanescent, and scarcely abide with us a day. The lacteals are pouring an incessant tide of nourishment into the arteries, which these are distributing through the whole frame, whence when it has answered its purposes, it is thrown out by various means. The muscles which are of a firmer texture, do not remain in a permanent state, they are in a constant condition of increase and diminution. How different is the muscular porter of thirty, from what he was when a babe; yet a few weeks of a fever will leave him a skeleton covered "with the loose nightgown of his own dun skin." Let health return, he casts his slough, puts on a new skin, his muscles swell to their natural size and proportion, and after due exercise for a few months more, he is as strong and as active as ever. Even our bones, the most solid, and apparently the least mutable parts of the human system, undergo a change similar to that which takes place in the other parts. There is a constant regenerating agency going on in them, as well as in the other parts of the human frame; hence the rapidity with which they repair their breaches; there is a constant absorption of their substance, which is carried out of the system by natural outgates. Hence on the one hand, if the regenerating agency gets into a morbid state, and overbalances the absorbtion, the bones are covered with excrescences, as in gout, and other diseases; and on the other hand, if the regenerating process ceases, and the absorbents continue to act, some bones disappear entirely.

In short, this animal machine of ours is continually wearing, and continually repairing itself. It has

the means of carrying off those materials, which have ceased to be useful, and are becoming injurious; and the means of supplying their place with fresh materials. Hence we sustain life so long: hence, when a man has been exhausted and broken down, he may by due care be set up again, as healthy and vigorous as ever he was. Hence it is the last effort of supreme medical skill, to restore a flagging function in the animal economy, or to check a function operating beyond the general balance of nature. Our bodies in fact are in perpetual flux. And it would be as unphilosophical to argue, that because the same river has been flowing at the foot of the same mountain for centuries, it must be composed of the same drops of water; as it would be to argue, that because I am the same man I was thirty years ago, therefore my body must consist of the same particles of matter. No man, therefore, can be sure that he at this moment possesses a single particle of the matter, which composed his body at his birth—nay, he has every philosophical reason to believe the contrary. We are sure that we are speaking agreeably to the laws of nature; and one law of nature is worth more than all the metaphysics, which puny man has made since he was placed on this planet.

If then, I cannot be sure that I possess a single particle of the body which belonged to me when I was born, how can I be sure that I possess a single particle of the body which belonged to Adam in Paradise! And shall I be so rash, so frivolous, so foolish, and so undutiful to God and man, as to found a great doctrine of religion on an hypothesis, the truth of which I can never know, and which the laws of nature obviously oppose? I shall only say farther that when I struggle

to stretch my narrow and weak conceptions, in order to imagine what particle of Adam can be in me, I feel myself totally overpowered and annihilated. I count over the many thousand years since that man was in Paradise; I count the millions of ancestors who have occurred between him and me, I attempt to conceive the myriads of millions of his descendants, and then I ask myself, if there be any particle of Adam's person in my body, what an infinitely small particle must it be! The mathematical divisibility of matter, might enable me to form an idea of the possibility of such minute division; but the actual divisibility of matter, wonderful as it is, would not give me any idea of the possibility of the fact, which this theory assumes. Such being the case, can it consist with the sound discretion of philosophy, to build up a moral system involving the righteousness of the whole government of God among men, upon an assumption which I can neither prove to be, nor conceive to be, a fact.

2. I come to the theory of Adam's begetting our souls, as well as our bodies. I am not going, however, to serve up again, the *crambe decies repetita* of *materialism* and *immaterialism*. I am merely going to ask myself, what conception I can form of deriving my soul from Adam. To simplify the question, I shall suppose myself his immediate son, Sheth for instance. What do I mean by Adam's communicating my soul to me? I can conceive but two suppositions. 1. That he communicated to me a part of his own soul. Or 2. that he willed my soul into existence. These are the only suppositions which my ingenuity can form, and I must leave them to those who think they can affix a meaning to them. To me they seem to have no meaning, and to be incapable of any. I do not at all

question, much less rate at a low value, the intellectual talents of some great men, who have traced our moral relation to Adam, to the derivation of our substance from him. I am convinced, however, that all they have said or written on the subject, has not cast a single ray of light upon it. Their theories are not portraits of actual existences; but fantastic, though brilliant, forms occasioned by the reflections and refractions of the rays of fancy, from the dew drops of metaphor.

There are two gross defects in all the theories on this subject. The first has been sufficiently exposed already, namely, that what they assume as a principle, is neither self-evident, nor capable of proof. The second is, that if we even were to admit the assumed principle, there is no possibility of tracing any connection between it, and the conclusion drawn from it.

Admitting that we derive both our souls and bodies from Adam—by what law does it follow that we must have the fate of our father in righteousness and life, or in sin and death? Does it follow, because God formed Adam's body of the dust of the earth, that, therefore to dust it must return? Or that because God breathed into him his soul, therefore unto God must that soul return? No such thing! All these hypothesis are equally false.

We know that our moral relation to Adam, was established by a positive law of God; and our participation with him in good or evil, depends on that positive statute: but some pass over the positive statute, and injudiciously go to the natural law of animal descent, for the origin of our morals. Thus they infer our moral relations, from our animal relations. I acknowledge that the two subjects which I am labouring to distinguish, lie very close to each

other. I admit that, as our moral duties for the most part, run in parallel lines with our natural relations, we are apt to mistake the one for the other; and as both lines are similarly graduated, we most readily take our measures from the most visible line, namely, that of our animal relations. I am fully aware of the influence, which habits of speculation must exert on the minds of those, who have been accustomed to trace the descent of original sin in the simple line of human descent. I judge it, therefore, to be profitable for them, and more advantageous to the truth, to quit this narrow and abstract view of the subject: and to state the broad moral fact, capable of the most complete moral demonstration,

THAT OUR NATURAL RELATIONS, AND MORAL OBLIGATIONS ARE ENTIRELY DISTINCT SYSTEMS.

I feel myself, in some degree, bound to take up this subject; having once in the heat of rapid, but not inconsiderate, composition used the following language: "I pledge myself to prove, on a moment's notice, that the natural relations of mankind, and their moral obligations, though exact correlates, are distinct systems. I shall show you every natural relation without its corrrelate moral obligation; and every moral obligation without its correlate natural relation."* It is plain, that if this engagement can be satisfactorily fulfilled, the candid will admit, that to trace our moral relations to Adam, merely to the animal law of natural relationship, is unphilosophical and sophistical.

* Fiend of the Reformation Detected.—p. 67.

As I have generalized the doctrine, I am entitled to search for my proofs any where, over the whole field of human relations and duties. I shall, however, neither uselessly multiply the instances, nor tediously enlarge upon those which shall be advanced.

As a preliminary remark, I would observe, that it never will be pretended, that our obligation to obey our Creator, depends on our having derived from Him the same nature, which he himself possesses; because such a derivation is manifestly impossible, notwithstanding the fine sayings of Plato and the poets, about the *divinæ particula auræ;* and, notwithstanding the fine figures of the inspired writers, declaring us to be all his offspring, and possessed of a divine nature. In like manner it may be asserted, that it is not because they participate in his nature, that the saints, or mankind at large, are bound to love and obey Jesus Christ. This subject is barely noticed at present; it shall, however, be fully discussed hereafter. At present I confine myself to the relations between man and man.

I. THE MORAL RELATION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE does not arise from any supposable material, animal, or natural relation which may exist between them. This remark merits illustration, as I do not expect, that it will be able to obtain implicit acceptance with many of my readers.

We are told, that as soon as Adam saw Eve, he exclaimed: "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." In respect to marriage in the human family generally, it is added: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

In order to consider the case of marriage, as it respects the human family at large, I shall pass over the marriage of Adam and Eve, and consider the intermarriages of their posterity; those marriages in which a man "leaves his father and mother," and "cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."

I believe it will be admitted, that if man is a part of any body, it must be of his father and mother. No natural relation possibly can be closer, no other is so close, as that between a child and its parents. Yet a man shall "leave his father and his mother," not by ceasing to be their child, which is impossible, but by withdrawing himself from that immediate subordination, and devotion, to them and their interests, which characterised his early years; and shall join himself to his wife, by a relation which death only can lawfully dissolve. He is so much one with her, in moral identity, that he can no more separate from her than from his own flesh. These are the facts; let us compare them together, let us weigh them, measure them, and guage them, in order to ascertain their moral ratios and proportions.

1. So far as we can see, the relation between parent and child, is more strictly natural, and more intimate, than the relation between husband and wife: the former was established by the act of the God of nature, without any consent or volition of the related parties, the latter is the result of the voluntary choice of the individuals; the relation, which God established in nature was prime and antecedent, the relation which man establishes comes in late, and yet obtains the moral ascendant and precedence. If I take these as mere natural relations, I can make out no consistency in this arrangement. But when I

view them as moral relations, I can see that when a man is qualified to become the head of a family, the filial moral relation has already produced its most essential advantages, his parents can do little more for him, and he can do little more for them; reserving a fund of kind feeling, and devoted attachment to each other; and a contingent fund of duties to be performed on either side, when God shall furnish the providential call, they part in peace; and the man is joined to his wife, and they two become one; the reasons of their union continue through life, and every day may be adding new reasons to the old.

2. The moral law of divorce, places this subject in a still clearer light. Suppose a man and woman married, and of two become one flesh; suppose them blessed with a common progeny. There is now every natural union, and natural relation, and natural tie, which can be conceived to exist between them and bind them together. Yet if that husband shall be able to convict his wife of adultery, he may according to the divine law, put her away from being his wife. And now they are no longer ONE—but TWO, and no two of the human family, are more completely alienated, separated, and severed for ever than they.—The natural relations, if any weight be laid on them, remain as they were, their common offspring remains to testify their former union; but the wife has violated her moral obligation in the marriage covenant, and the husband declares himself released from his moral obligation under that covenant. The moral relation is dissolved.

3. A betrothed virgin owes her husband the same fidelity before cohabitation—as after it: hence Jo-

seph considered himself injured when he suspected Mary of infidelity.

The conclusion is, that the matrimonial relation is purely moral; that it exists where no natural union, or relation, has taken place, and that it may be dissolved where every natural relation and unity have intervened.

II. THE MORAL RELATION BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD does not depend upon any natural animal relation between them. This is no paradox. And if in illustrating it, I must glance at subjects of a delicate nature, I beg it to be understood, that the moral anatomist has his rights and privileges, as well as the physical anatomist; and the best interests of society require, that they should be secured in the full enjoyment of all those rights and privileges. And if any frivolous thing, should dare to display a smile, while the anatomist exercises his exalted profession, let him be turned out the theatre, as unworthy to contemplate those sublime subjects, which are worthy of the God of nature, and worthy of those whom he thinks worthy to engage in their investigation.

How now would it answer, I ask, to found a farther's duty to his new born infant, upon an infallible assurance, that he actually begot it? In general nothing but a miracle would give that assurance. But the man has ample *moral* assurance, that the child is his own; he has, and he has nothing more than, the plighted fidelity of the woman he trusts and loves. Yet upon that moral foundation. upon female fidelity, has been built up all the immense system of duties, discharged by fathers to their children, in all the generations of the human race.

Where would filial duty be, if we were to found our obligations, upon our natural relation to our parent. Certain it is that no man ever knew with philosophical certainty, who were his parents. We may recollect, that at an early period of our lives, we found ourselves under the care of a man and a woman, who were very kind us; who called us their children, and taught us to call them father and mother; but this is all we can know of the matter. In fact our moral feelings were evolved, our dutiful habits formed, our filial virtues brought to a high degree of perfection, before we were capable of forming the idea of parentage or filiation. Even now that with matured minds, we look back at the scene, and then consult our heads, respecting the causes of our immutable filial attachments, we will find that it was love, kindness, and goodness, that made them parents, according to the estimate of our moral feelings. And if an angel were to descend from heaven, and rectify some mistake relative to the ramifications of our genealogical tree, and assure us, that we were actually the children of a different pair, it would not alter our feelings in the smallest degree. The same man and woman, would be our parents still; they loved us, when there was no body else to love us; and took care of us, when we could not take care of ourselves.

I might speak of step-children, of adopted children, of foundlings, brought up upon the knees of those, who they knew were not their natural progenitors—will any one say that these are total strangers to all filial feelings, duties and attachments; or that those who so nurtured them were strangers to parental storge, loyalty and devotion.

I shall just add one short word more; that although the natural relation between parents and children never can be broken but by death, yet the moral relation between them may be broken; so that a parent shall owe to his child no duty whatever, save what is common to the human race; and again, that a child shall owe no duty whatever of a filial character to its parent. These are doubtless rare cases, but they occur; and God in his law has made provision for them, as men have done in their laws. I need not go into the instances of unnatural parents, who expose their own children to perish; or of unnatural children, who curse or strike their parents. I shall produce a passage of Scripture, which shows that all the duties supposed to flow from natural relations, may be set aside by the law of morality.

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee; or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."*

This is absolutely decisive of the question in its fullest amplitude. If our moral obligations spring

* Deut. xiii. 6—10.

from our natural relations; then so long as the natural relations remain, the moral obligations must retain their power of binding the conscience, as a matter of course: but if all our moral obligations to our nearest friends may cease entirely, while yet the natural relations continue in existence, then are they distinct systems. A brother, a son, a daughter, the wife of my bosom, a friend dear as my own soul—and yet my eye must not pity them, I must not spare them, I must not conceal them; but I must inform upon them, but I must arrest them, but I must testify against them, but I must have them condemned, but I must march to the place of execution with them, as their chief executioner, not as their comforter; my hand must be first upon them, I must surely kill them. Every feeling belonging to kindred and personal relationship, must be obliterated from my heart. Pity must be hid from my eyes—yet they are my blood and kindred still.

One more proof, and I am done; I shall show that Jesus Christ has decided the question in its utmost latitude, and in all possible cases, that our moral duties and relations, are distinct from our natural relations; and that the one may be found in full perfection where the other is not.

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, what is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering, said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour? And Je-

sus answering, said, a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, go, and do thou likewise."*

The moral brother was the brother indeed! And strongly do I fear that a day is coming, when many a tender husband and loving wife, and indulgent parent, and attached child, and combined family, will be found, who have possessed only the virtues of the lion's den; animals of instinct, with instinctive attachments, and instinctive enjoyments; but without one particle of that heavenly, moral charity, which feels the irresistible impulse of doing good to all mankind, so far as opportunity and ability extend, for the sake of that God who is love.

But I must now explain my object in all this discussion, as it may not, perhaps, be yet fully apparent

* Luke x. 25—37.

to every reader. I certainly do not imagine, that I have uttered a single sentiment, new, ingenious, or unknown to any sensible understanding. But I certainly had an object in view in keeping so long under the direct beam of scriptural light, this simple principle, that there is not a single moral relation in the human family that can be identified with any of our natural relations; that there is not a single moral duty, which can be amalgamated with our animal relations; but that our animal relations, and moral obligations, though correlates, are distinct systems. I assert that I have demonstrated this latter position to be scriptural doctrine; I insist also that it is sound philosophy; for its evidence can be found both in the book of Revelation, and in the book of nature. And, therefore, my general conclusion is, that no true theologian, or philosopher will deny the doctrine.

If then in the whole circle of man's moral duties, there is not one which can be fastened down to his animal relations—what shall we think of that religious theory, which fastens down the moral relations of the whole human family to Adam, in the covenant of works, to the natural relationship of animal procreation? There is the Hydra for you! The speculators may do what they please with it: It is their own creature.

There is a circumstance of so important a nature, that I am somewhat disappointed, that none of these speculators have ever so much as adverted to its existence—it is this, that our whole animal system, its relations, proportions, pleasures, pains; the sum of all its good, and of all its evils; its perfect and complete totality, is in reality nothing more, than the mere scaffolding which God makes use of in

building up the intellectual and moral fabric of man; and that when the fabric is completed and finished off, the scaffolding is torn down, and cast away; that the majesty, proportions, and decorations, of the building may be displayed to the admiration of competent judges.

This is the view of our nature which the Son of God, its original architect, and after its ruin, the restorer of it to its original design, exhibited in plain terms, to those frivolous speculators who had lost their wits in speculating on animal relations.

Mat. xxii. 23—30. "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection; and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

Add to this what the apostle has written in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. "So also in the resurrection of the dead, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." "Now this I say,

brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory."

These passages exhibit sublime views of our nature; it is not this corruptible structure of flesh and blood; it is not this natural or animal body, with its animal passions and propensities; but a body spiritual and incorruptible, and glorious, which shall enter into the heavenly inheritance; every thing that characterised the animal shall be left behind.

And when the saints shall assemble in heaven, elevated beyond all the animal laws of the earthly state of humanity, our Lord informs us that "they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage; but shall be as the angels of God." The whole system of our animal nature, and its animal laws, will be abolished, and like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind.

But if all our moral relations, and of consequence all our moral duties, grow out of our animal relations, the destruction of the latter, must be the destruction of the former also. The root is perished, the tree dies away; the foundation is overturned, and the building has fallen with it into everlasting ruins.

What will those say to this, who trace our connection with Adam in the covenant of works, and of consequence our connection with the blessing of that covenant, namely, eternal life—who trace all these to the mere animal law of generation. To me at least, no theory can appear more unscriptural and absurd, than that which these gentlemen discuss with so much apparent science, and inculcate with so much zeal. Their system I never can adopt. The Scriptures assure me, that God was the author of our animal nature, and of all its laws; but the same Scriptures inform me, that when the wise and gracious purposes of his pleasure shall have been gained, all his animal system shall be entirely swept away, like the scaffolding of a magnificent building, as I have said already, and the moral system of man shall stand exposed to the view and admiration of the universe.

It was this view of human nature, a view for which I am indebted, to no ingenuity, talent, or industry of my own; but to the felicity of a youthful determination, to know nothing, and to believe nothing, in religious matters, which I could not see in the Scriptures with my own eyes.—I say it was this view of human nature which prompted me to exclaim in a former publication.—"And O! that I had but time to prove, what I have time only to throw out, probably to be knocked about as a paradox; I should prove that the moral system of our race, was not made for the natural, but the natural for the moral. If the reader can make any thing of this, it is at his service; if not, he can let it alone." I have been indulged by a beneficent providence with time and leisure to produce the proof of my doctrine. And now in relation to my proof

I say, as I formerly said, in respect to the doctrine itself, "If the reader can make any thing of this, it is at his service; if not, he can let it alone." I ask no man to adopt my views of those things, but no man must attempt to oblige me to renounce them.

To give my sentiments, however, a fair chance for that reception, to which I honestly think them entitled, I must make a couple of explanatory remarks.

1. The first remark goes to explain the meaning which I attach to the assertion that "the moral system of our race was not made for the natural." If the moral law had for its object, the production of the most perfect and permanent race of human animals, then I conceive that the moral system of our race would have been made for the animal. It would have resembled those systems of breeding, feeding, and training, which some practical philosophers have introduced for the purpose of meliorating the stock of our domestic cattle, such as horses, cows, sheep, and so on. I am far from insinuating, that the moral, does not actually improve the animal qualities of mankind. The temperance, industry, and good affections which the divine law enjoins, have the directest tendency to promote the personal vigour, beauty, and longevity of our race, as well as to advance the harmony and comforts of our social intercourse. And I am satisfied, that this is the view of religion which is taken by a multitude, who praise and commend its beneficial effects upon human society; and that this view is the cause, why it receives so much tolerance and encouragement from mere secular politicians, who are entirely inimical to its genuine spirit and power. I would be far from diminishing the importance of

religion in this view of it, low as it is. I am perfectly satisfied that, all other things being equal, a strict observance of the law of morality, will advance a society to an inconceivable degree, in every valuable animal quality and enjoyment. And believing, as I do, that all the good effect which result from any divine constitution, were intended and designed to result from it, I am sure that God intended his law to promote the animal excellence, and happiness of our race. But, I deny that this is the grand design, or ultimate end, of our moral system. I think, that no man, who has a moderate acquaintance with the genius of that system, will suppose that it stops short at the point specified. My own ideas on the subject, may be gathered from the following article.

2. I have said that "the natural system of our race was made for the moral." This, perhaps, requires some explanation. When a man has long been accustomed to a certain concatenation of ideas, he is apt to think, that his readers are as well acquainted with his intellectual processes, as he is himself. His own familiarity with a subject, beguiles him into an opinion, that others are equally familiar with it; and hence in stating it, he takes long strides, which his readers are not prepared for; and when he comes to his conclusion, they stare, as if at a piece of legerdemain, or at a miracle. If they have confidence in the man, they believe him a prodigy; if they are jealous of him, they pronounce him a cheat. I am satisfied, that those long hiatuses which we sometimes meet with in the reasonings of some authors, must have arisen from this cause. In avoiding this error, others fall into verbosity and dullness.

I have proved from the Scriptures, that our animal system will be abolished in heaven. Let us take a view of this whole subject. We are assured in the Scriptures, that mankind are not to continue an endless race on this earth; the system of propagation and death, is not to go on to perpetuity. The day will come when the number of the human family will be filled up, and this globe shall be consumed by fire. Thus our animal system must end! And, in respect to those human animals who have existed on this earth, when they are translated to their ultimate destination, the Scriptures assure us, that the animal system ceases as to them; their bodies are spiritual bodies. they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God. The moral system, however, is eternal: the moral being never is destroyed; the moral law never is abolished; the happiness of the saints, and their activity, of course, is everlasting.

Now, as the animal system coexists, for a time, with the moral, and notoriously operates upon it; and, as the former is destined to pass away, while the latter is to be permanent and eternal; it follows, of course, that God made the animal system for the moral, and not the moral for the animal.

There is a subject which does not lie directly in my way, but which it may not be thought quite a digression to mention; and which I beg leave to recommend to the consideration of those, who are engaged in the investigation of our moral relations and duties, on the mere principles of nature, or on the principles of philosophy.

It is well known, that there is a school of philosophers, who are totally immersed in our animal nature;

every thing in man, is according to them animal, and the animal itself nothing more than a material animated machine. Hence, they explain all our intellectual phenomena, by certain vibrations, or other collisions of the corpuscles, or minute parts, of which our bodies are formed. It is a part of this system to consider all our moral feelings, as nothing more than our animal instincts, somewhat refined and sublimated. I believe that this system of philosophy, has been often and amply refuted by another school of philosophers, more attentive to the laws of nature, and more cautious to guard against the fascinations of hypothesis.

Now I would ask if this system, in philosophy, be not the exact counterpart of the theological system, which founds all our moral relations and duties upon our animal relation to Adam? I think the two systems extremely analogous; or rather, I think them to be, at bottom, identically the same.

My object has been to prove, from the Scriptures themselves, that they never do deduce man's moral, from his animal relations; but represent these systems as distinct; coexisting indeed for a time, and mutually acting and reacting on each other: but, destined to a final separation, the one to vanish, the other to endure for ever.

This chapter, however, is already too long; I shall, therefore, throw a remaining branch of my subject into a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—THE THEORY OF THE BELIEVER'S SUBSTANTIAL IDENTIFICATION WITH JESUS CHRIST EXAMINED AND REFUTED.

THE question which is now brought before us, is this, namely, what is the principle of the believer's IDENTIFICATION with Jesus Christ; so that in the eye of the law, his righteousness is their righteousness; and that, therefore, they are as much justified by the law, as he is justified by it; and are as free from its curse and penalty, as he is; and "are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ." In short, in the eye of the law, and of divine justice, they are ONE with Christ. How are they ONE? How can they be ONE? A volume would not suffice to rehearse all the inconceivable things, which have been brought forward in answer to this interrogatory. It shall suffice, to mention the GRAND THEORY on this subject; to point out its origin, and to demonstrate its absolute impossibily, absurdity, and impiety. Enough shall be said for the satisfaction of the unlearned; to the learned, the mere suggestion of topics will be more than sufficient.

GRAND THEORY.

THAT BELIEVERS ARE ACTUALLY AND SUBSTANTIALLY ONE WITH JESUS.

The idea is, that we are condemned in the covenant of works, because we are a *substantial* part of that Adam, who sinned by eating the forbidden fruit; and that believers are justified under the covenant of grace, because they are so united to Christ, as to become a substantial part of that person, who magnified the law and made it honorable, and expiated human guilt by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

The supposition that believers are thus substantially one with Jesus Christ, is so absurd, and the fact supposed so absolutely impossible, that one would think that no man of sane understanding could adopt or profess to believe it. The case has fallen out otherwise, and, therefore, it is necessary to point out the origin of the error.

The conversion of metaphors into literal facts, has produced this most monstrous theory, as well as ten thousand others. From different ways of managing this conversion, there arise two large families of theologians, the MYSTICS and the METAPHYSICIANS. The mystics rising on the wings of metaphor, soar aloft into regions so distant and etherial, that the vision of ordinary men is incapable of reaching them; while, at the same time, we occasionally hear such warblings of real piety, such exquisite modulations of devotional feelings, as to make us wish we were along with them. Their imagination is so happily combined with great sensibility of purified feeling, as to produce in them

something more exquisite in kind, and superior in degree, to the raptures of poetic inspiration.

The METAPHYSICIANS are characteristically different. Nothing on earth is so cool, so deliberate, so unimpassioned, as they. Their method of proceeding is, first to convert a metaphor into an abstraction, and then to commence the process of interminable reasoning; but through mazes so dark, so tortuous, and intricate, and involved, that persons not trained and practised in their arts, cannot, with safety, venture to follow them. Yet, they often escape the perils of their own labyrinths, and emerge into day, under the pure light of gospel truth.

Let us produce a few, (merely by way of sample) of the metaphors which have been abused, in respect to the believer's ONENESS with Jesus Christ.

1. John vi. 51—57. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me:" Verse 60, 62: "Many, therefore, of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying, who can

hear it? When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmurred at it, he said unto them: Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

"It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not."

Here is the key to the passage. The literal meaning of the metaphors profits nothing; their spiritual meaning quickeneth: the words which I speak unto you have a spiritual meaning, which giveth life. The eating of the bodily flesh, and drinking of the bodily blood of Jesus would profit nothing; but the enjoyment of his redemption by faith would save the soul.—But why did he use these metaphors, and not plain language? Because some of them "believed not;" and would of course have rejected the truth, had it been propounded to them in simple terms. He therefore throws out figures to enrapture their imagination, to elicit thought, to excite investigation, and to make them by personal inquiry the instructors of themselves; that the truth might be the more acceptable to them, when it should seem to be the fruit of their own ingenuity. Such were the only reasons which induced our Lord on any occasion, in any audience, to employ the parable instead of the plain speech. It never was his intention to conceal the truth, or to obscure it; but always to declare it, and exhibit it in the shape and dress best suited to recommend it to the particular taste and capacity of his audience. Yet sometimes his audience most strangely mistook his metaphors, and gave them a literal interpretation; thus in the instance before us, the Jews exclaimed, "how can this man give us his flesh to

eat!" And in another instance, Nicodemus exclaimed, "How can a man be born again, when he is old!"

2. Cor. vi. 15—17. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What! know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, says he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

On this passage I remark, that the immoral union with an harlot, is compared to the moral union between husband and wife; and the figure of the matrimonial union, is used to portray the spiritual union between Christ and believers. In the illustrating object from whence the figure is taken, two persons are said to become one flesh; in the illustrated object, two persons are said to become one spirit. It would seem to be the apostle's intention to represent the latter union as more intimate and sublime than the former; to say that two persons are one spirit, is a stronger expression, than to say that they are one flesh. Doubtless the union between Jesus and believers is more intimate, sublime, and momentous, than that between husband and wife; for this relates to temporal things, that to eternal; this may be dissolved by crime, and certainly shall be dissolved by death; that has a provision against the operation of crime; and shall never be dissolved; for the dead saint sleepeth in Jesus, and shall be raised up in the resurrection, to enjoy an everlasting union with the author of his redemption, and the source of all his desires and of all his bliss.

3. Eph. v. 25. "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing

of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Here again, I would call the reader's attention to the studied energy of the apostle's language, and to his pleonastic diction, in which he heaps term upon term, not for the purpose of explaining his subject, but for the purpose of impressing us with its importance. As formerly he said, that he who is "joined to the Lord is one spirit; so here he says that they are "one body;" yea, that they are members of his body and of his flesh and of his bones." Take all this literally and it is not true. For there is not a particle of Christ's body, nor of his soul, nor of his divinity in any of his saints: nor a particle of their bodies or of their souls in him.

This is the very spot upon which divine light pours all its concentrated rays, without the slightest mixture of darkness; and I wonder that any one of those who have treated of the union of Jesus, and the saints, should not have distinctly perceived, that it is not at all a union of substances; but a moral union of persons, in a system of political society, organised by God for their mutual co-operation, according to their several

stations and powers, for the promotion of one grand end, namely, his own glory, in the regeneration of the world.

If men had kept this object distinctly in view, and not permitted themselves to be blinded by metaphors; and if they had used the like caution in their investigations respecting the union of the whole human family under the covenant of works, I am fully persuaded they would have perceived that the union of Adam and his posterity, and all the diversified unions which take place among them, in their endlessly diversified relations, under the covenant of works, are not in fact unions of substance; but merely moral unities of social organization. Why should the union between Adam and his posterity, in the original law of works, be of any other kind, than the union of saints with Jesus under the remedial law of grace;—that is under the same law, in its remedial form? The union between Jesus and his saints is purely moral, why should not the union between Adam and his posterity be purely moral?

Do you appeal to the very words of Scripture? Do you say that God "hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth"—I say that the saints are "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Do you say that the husband and wife are one flesh—I say that he who is joined to the Lord is not only one body with his Redeemer, but one spirit also. Proceed as far as you please, multiply your quotations to prove the unity of Adam and his posterity, in the covenant of works; for every quotation which you can produce (and bring forward all in the Bible) for every one of your quotations, I pledge myself to produce two, which shall assert the union between Jesus and his

saints. You shall have phrase for phrase, figure for figure; two to one—and in addition to all this, an energy of language and a strength of colouring incomparably superior to any thing, which you can advance. Yet this union is purely moral!

4. Rom. xii. 4—6. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace given unto us"—Here we are taught not only that the saints are "one body in Christ," but that they are "members one of another." How are they members one of another? how are they united together? Not by the common blood of Adam, for that bond existed before they were members of this one body, and members one of another; and that bond binds them equally to all mankind. The bond of their mutual union in Christ is wholly moral or spiritual: It is their common faith, in the same Redeemer, binding them to co-operate with him, and with each other, in promoting the glory of God. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace given" to them individually, these gifts are common property, as the apostle teaches, and must be exerted for the good of the whole. Hence as the same apostle speaks, in the twelfth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians: "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." There must be "no schism in the body;" each member must discharge its appropriate functions; if one member suffers, all the rest sympathise in its affliction; and if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

I presume I have produced evidence enough to prove, that notwithstanding all the strong metaphors used to illustrate this subject, the union between Jesus and the saints, and the reciprocal union between the saints themselves, are purely moral or spiritual unions; and that all the moral relations among them, stand quite distinct from any animal connections which exist, or can be supposed to exist, between them.

I proceed, therefore, without farther delay, to show some of the absurd theories, which have originated in the supposition, that the union between the Redeemer and his saints consists in a certain, though inexplicable, identification, or amalgamation of their substances. That he and they are somehow melted into one substance is a theory, which has prevailed equally before, and since, the reformation; and has been equally rife and popular in the church of Rome, and in the reformed churches.

1. TRANSUBSTANTIATION involves this theory, or rather it is the most perfect form, in which the theory has appeared. In the sacrament of the supper, says the Romish church, we eat the very body, and drink the very blood of the Son of God; he becomes incorporated with us, and we become incorporated with him; hence we have eternal life, because we are one with the Son of God. Erasmus expressed himself on transubstantiation in terms full of faith and skepticism: "As to literally eating the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, I confess I do not see how it is possible, nor can I conceive what good it would do us, were it effected; however I do not trouble myself with such things, but am content to believe as the church believes." This

power of believing what a man pleases, just by an act of volition, is certainly a most comfortable faculty; at least it must save one a world of trouble, in respect to that which Solomon has pronounced, "a weariness of the flesh."

2. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the blessed virgin, involves the same theory. The first broachers of this doctrine must have reasoned thus. The Scripture saith, "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." But as Jesus was born clean, or morally pure, it follows, that his mother was free from the pollution of original sin. Certainly this is very plausible reasoning; a thousand things have been written and said by theologians, decreed by councils, and propagated over Christendom, which do not possess half its verisimilitude. But did these philosophical theologians ask themselves—how could the virgin Mary be born free from original sin, unless her parents had been clean from its defilement? I am sure they asked the question; but they found it convenient not to wait for an answer. Their decision in regard to the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, was not suffered to remain a barren theory; it was applied to practical purposes. On the one hand, it helped them to account for the immaculate birth of Jesus Christ; and on the other hand it furnished them with a GODDESS!

3. I read in the writings of some of the ablest divines of the reformed churches, this sentiment; that the Holy Ghost sanctified (that is, I presume, purified from the stain of original sin) that portion of the virgin's substance out of which he formed the body of Christ. I neither assert, nor deny this doctrine. But I am sure it was derived from the

philosophical theory, that Adam's sin descends in the blood. Its abettors have never produced a text of Scripture in proof of it; nor do I know a text, which they could have produced. Might they not have satisfied themselves, with producing the Scriptures, which prove that Christ was born without sin; which is the fact asserted in the Bible; and abstained from speculating about the manner, in which that fact was brought about; a circumstance, on which so far as I know, or these speculatists have showed, the Scriptures say nothing.

4. Consubstantiation is another form of the theory in question. Luther maintained that the bread and wine in the holy eucharist, are not transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ; but remain bread and wine still: at the same time he asserted, that together with the bread and wine, we actually do eat the very body and drink the very blood of the Son of God. This eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, together with the bread and wine, he called consubstantiation. It is obvious, that this theory of consubstantiation, like that of transubstantiation, sprung from giving a literal interpretation to our Lord's figurative speech. "This is my body broken for you—this is my blood shed for the remission of sin." In comparing the two theories together, we will find them equal in absurdity; and that the only difference between them, is, that transubstantiation more exactly suits the literal meaning of the figurative expressions, than consubstantiation. Upon the whole may we not exclaim: behold the mysteries of a metaphor! And many such things there are, manufactured out of the same stuff. According to Luther, as well as to the Pope, the very

body and blood of the Son of God are incorporated with the body and blood of the saints at the communion table.

5. Several writers on practical piety, men of active imagination and warm feelings, when speaking of the union of saints with Jesus, use language to which it is not easy to affix any ideas. It is full of metaphor, and uncommonly rapturous. What conception they have formed to themselves, of the union under consideration, it is impossible to say; we can scarcely doubt, however, that they intend by their speeches, something far beyond a mere moral or spiritual unity; something which would amount in effect, to some kind of amalgamation with the person of Christ. I cannot find in my heart to censure such writers with severity. Their fine fancy, and fine feelings, have a tendency to excite a devotional temper of mind, with affection and attachment to the Lord our Redeemer. It may, perhaps, be my fault, not theirs, that I cannot comprehend their ideas of the unity of Christ and believers. If any thing more be understood by that union, than that he loves them, blesses them, and delights in them; and that they trust in him, love him, and obey him; and that they all co-operate together as a corporate body, in promoting the glory of God in the regeneration of the world: I say, if any thing more be meant than this moral union, I despair of knowing what it is on earth. I have already demonstrated that there is no union of substances between Christ and his saints; and the moral union described is plainly revealed in the Scriptures; and most explicitly recognised, and acknowledged by all the christian world. Now if there be any third species of union, lying between these two, or different

from them, I candidly own, that I cannot conceive what it can be; and suspect that the investigation of such a union is beyond the faculties granted to man.

There is a letter from Calvin to Peter Martyr, dated Geneva, August 8th, 1555, on the subject of the believer's union with Jesus Christ, which is both curious and interesting; the following extract will, I suppose, not be unacceptable to the reader.

"What I proposed to write concerning the secret communication which we have with Christ, I shall not perform so fully as you expected. Although the subject is of great importance, yet I think it may be sufficiently defined between you and myself in a few words. Of the communion which the Son of God has with our nature, by assuming our flesh, that he might become our brother, I shall say nothing. But I shall treat of that which emanates from his divine power, and communicates life to us, so that we are made to grow into one body with him. At the same time that we receive Christ by faith, as he offers himself in the gospel, we are made truly members of him, and life flows into us from him as *a capite*, from the head. For no other way does he reconcile us unto God, by the sacrifice of his death, but as he is ours, and we are one with him. So I interpret the passage of Paul, where he says, the faithful are called into κοινωνιαν, *fellowship*, 1 Cor. i. 9. Nor does the word fellowship, or partnership, appear to me, sufficiently to express his mind. He would designate that sacred oneness by which the Son of God would ingraft us into his body, that we might be partakers of his fulness. We so draw life from his flesh and blood, that we may with propriety call

them our food. How that is done, I confess is far above the comprehension of my understanding. I rather humbly admire, than labour to comprehend this mystery. But this I confess, that by the divine power of the Spirit, life is poured from heaven to earth. For the flesh of Christ does not give life of itself, nor would its efficacy reach us, but that, by the incomprehensible work of the Spirit, Christ dwells in us, supports and nourishes us, and performs all the functions of a head. I preclude in this way all approach to the gross inventions about the intermixture of SUBSTANCES. It is sufficient for me, that while the body of Christ remains in celestial glory, life flows from him to us, as the root transmits the nourishment to the branches. Many of the ancient fathers, particularly Hilary and Cyril, I perceive, were carried away much too far. I do not so exactly follow their hyperboles, but that I will always ingenuously oppose myself to their authority, when it is made to patronize error. While they contend that Christ is consubstantial ομοουσιον with the Father, because it is written 'I and the Father are one,' the Arians retort, what is presently added, 'that they also may be one in us.' Thus are they taken in their own ignorance, and they have recourse to this miserable subterfuge, that we are of the same ESSENCE with Christ. This being confessed, they were necessarily involved in many other absurdities. But that these new fabricators, may not produce against us the authority of the fathers, it will be sufficient for me to say that I do not subscribe to them, that I may not willingly draw them into the controversy."

This curious extract will, I imagine, be entertaining to the reader. It appears that several of the ancient fathers, two of whom he names, had been so far led

away by the figurative language of Scripture, as to assert that the union between Christ and believers constituted them one ESSENCE with him; and farther that there were in the days of Calvin, some "NEW FABRICATORS" of theories who were reviving the same unintelligible dogma. In respect of Calvin's opinion on the subject generally we may observe,

1. He treats with great contempt the hypothesis of a *substantial* union between Christ and believers. "I preclude," says he, "all approach to the gross inventions about the intermixture of SUBSTANCES." He censures the fathers for carrying to extravagance, the figurative language of Scripture on this subject: "I do not so exactly follow their hyperboles, but that I will always ingenuously oppose myself to their authority when it is made to patronize error." And as he knew that the Fathers were against him; and that "New Fabricators," as he calls them, would not fail to produce their authority against him, he declines their authority altogether, "I do not subscribe to them, that I may not willingly draw them into the controversy." He ascribes their sentiments to ignorance; talks of a "miserable subterfuge," which "necessarily involved them in other absurdities." All this is exactly coincident with the doctrine which we have advanced and demonstrated in the present chapter.

2. It is also apparent, that in treating of this union, Calvin indulges himself in a free and abundant use of figurative language. There seems to be even a little tinge of mysticism in his language, when he says: "We so draw life from his flesh and blood, that we may properly call them our food. How that is done, I confess is far beyond the comprehension of my understanding. I rather humbly

admire than labour to comprehend this mystery." It might seem that while Calvin scorned the theory of a union of substance between Christ and believers, he had a conjecture, that there was some thing more in it, than that mere moral unity, which we have asserted in this chapter. If this was really his idea, of which I confess myself a little uncertain, he at least tells us, that he could form no conception of such a union. "It is," says he, "far beyond the comprehension of my understanding: I rather, humbly admire, than labour to comprehend this mystery." This is certainly both discreet and modest. He knew there was a union between the parties, and he did not chuse to pry curiously into its nature.

Yet when he comes to explain himself, I cannot draw any thing from his language beyond the mere moral union. "But this I confess," says he, "that by the power of the Spirit, life is poured from heaven to earth:" "It is by the work of the Spirit, that Christ dwells in us, and performs all the functions of a head." This I really believe is exactly the same, with what I have denominated a moral union between Christ and believers. The work of the Spirit in the saints may be summed up in *faith*, *love*, and *obedience;* and this view of the general subject, seems to me the same with the sentiment heretofore expressed. "If any thing more be understood by that union, than that he (Jesus) loves them, blesses them, and delights in them; and that they trust in him, love him, and obey him; and that they all co-operate with him, as a corporate body in promoting the glory of God in the regeneration of the world: I say if any thing more be meant than

this moral union, I despair of knowing what it is on earth." Calvin owns that this was the amount of all he knew of the matter.

I would not wish, however, to be understood as quoting Calvin for an authority to establish my views and opinions; these I wish to stand solely upon the scriptural basis were they are placed. I never shall appeal to human authority in any matter of religion; because if I plead it in my favour, I must in fairness admit it when it is against me. And as frail man is much more prone to go wrong, than to go right, true religion has always much to fear when her merits are to be decided by human authority. But I quoted the passage, as a pregnant proof of the fact, that there have been in all ages of the church, speculators and theorists, who with the slim equipment of a *word* or a *metaphor* could build up a system, which would overturn christianity, annihilate common sense, and fill the world with strife and controversy; and I had no objection to let my readers have a specimen of the dignity and firmness of Calvin, in declining the authority of the venerable fathers of the christian church, when their rash speculations were brought forward to support erroneous theories.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE RESPECTING ORIGINAL SIN—DIFFERENT THEORIES—CALVIN,—THE XXXIX. ARTICLES—WESTMINSTER CON. FAITH.

Returned from the world which man has been making, and counting up the acquisitions of knowledge which we have made in our travels, we find that the old and popular theory, which accounts for the transmission of Adam's sin to his posterity by asserting, that we are a *substantial* part of him who committed the sin, is entirely unsatisfactory. We are not sure of the fact, that there is a particle of Adam's body in ours: and if we were sure of the fact, we could assign no moral reason, why that circumstance should subject us to sin and misery. Again, we have in our travels ascertained, that the theory, which accounts for the believer's participation in the redemption, which is in Christ, from a substantial union with his person, is false and absurd in every view.

And now that we are once more at leisure, in our own sober world, which God has made, and where we are to walk by a faith founded upon his own infallible testimony, we find that we know no more about original sin, after all our travels in the world of philosophy, than we had learned before we left

home; namely that Adam sinned, and brought his posterity into the same state of sin and death with himself. *"Res est notissima causa latet."* If you are to convince men that the whole human race are a set of miserable sinners, appeal to the falsehood, perjuries, oppressions, murders, wars, bedlams, hospitals, jails, jibbets, graveyards, which cover our globe; sin and misery joined hand in hand, conduct us through the whole of our dreary pilgrimage, and at last consign us to the everlasting forgetfulness of the grave. But if you are to convince a man that he himself is a sinner, go back to the follies of his childhood, the sins of his youth, the enormities of his riper years; press him home, burst open the adamantine doors of his heart, enter the chambers of imagery, and display to his own eyes the foulness of his lusts, the pollution of every imagination of the thoughts of his heart. These are the means, which God has appointed, and employed, to bring home a sense of sin to the consciences of men; and they are the only means, which ever did produce conviction and remorse. But as to that speculation about sin travelling down from Adam to us in an infinitesimal particle of matter, which they say (but never can prove) was transmitted to us by natural generation, it never did, and it never to all eternity will convince any man of sin; nor produce any other effect, than the oafish stare of stupid wonder, or the blistering sneer of contemptuous ridicule.

It is a fact that in Adam's fall, we all fell—but beyond the mere fact we know nothing—the *whys*, and *hows*, and *wherefores*—the *modes* and the *manners*—all, all, are hid in darkness impenetrable by

man. We must rest satisfied with a knowledge of the fact. And since sinners we are, our proper business is not to puzzle ourselves with vain questions about the *manner*, or the *means*, of our being brought into so unhappy a condition; but humbly to inquire of God by what means we may be saved.

And since he has informed us, that he who believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved, and that faith worketh by love; and that love promotes the fulfilment of the whole law; our duty is to believe in the Son of God; and if our faith be genuine, we shall love him; and if we love him, we shall keep his commandments; and in keeping his commandments, there is a great reward. That all the saints will appear with the Lord Jesus, in the last day when he presents himself and them to his Father, saying, behold me and the children whom thou hast given me; that they shall be ever with the Lord; he and they forming one glorious kingdom, in the general empire of God; the centre and point of attraction for the universe, we know; that never was a family so attached, an army so organized, a kingdom so compacted together, in true moral unity; as Christ and his saints will be attached, organized, and compacted together, in the most perfect and indissoluble moral union, we are sure. They are one in every moral view. One in human nature; one political body under one moral law and constitution; one in moral righteousness; their object, and aim, is one, to all eternity. All this we know from the Scriptures to be true; and it contains no paradox or absurdity to stagger our conceptions.

But if, leaving this assured ground, we go to talk about a union which shall melt the saints into the substance or essence of the Son of God; or if we mystify the subject, and dealing only in figures, throw ideas and conceptions entirely out of question, what shall we gain by the procedure! But I weary of gazing on empty space, and of demonstrating the futility of phrases to which their authors own they affix no ideas.

What an immense pile of rubbish, of dogmatical and polemical theology, would be removed out of our way, if on the subjects in consideration, men would content themselves with the simple facts, (all by the way that they ever can know) and abandon their mysticism and their metaphysics, which by means of words without ideas protract interminable controversies. Nor are the controversies themselves, the worst thing we have to complain of; the ill blood and uncharitableness, the haughty censoriousness and alienation, which they occasion, are baneful to the christian church. You deny a man's metaphysic, or his metaphor, and he lets loose against you all the fervour of his zeal, as against an obstinate gainsayer, a wilful heretic, an intentional corrupter of the gospel. The war which is waged for nothing can never have an end; but necessarily is as eternal as its object.

Before I quit this subject, I would beg leave to lay before the reader, a curious difference of metaphysical views on the doctrine of original sin, which has occasioned a slight difference in the philosophical manner of exhibiting it, in two churches which agree in the scriptural exhibition of the fact.

The established Church of England thus expresses herself.

Art. ix. Of Original or Birth-Sin.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Westminister Confession of Faith. Chapter vi. Sect. iii.

"Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof."

"They (our first parents) being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation."

Shorter Catechism.

Ques. xviii. *"Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?"*

Ans. "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

The thirty-nine articles, are more exactly Calvinistic on the subject of original sin, than the Westminster

Confession of Faith. The following are Calvin's views. After a variety of observations, he says, in the first chapter of the second book, paragraph fifth. "This is that hereditary corruption, which the fathers called original sin, meaning by sin the depravation of a nature previously good and pure. On which subject they had much contention, nothing being more remote from common sense, than that all should be criminated on account of the guilt of one, and thus his sin become common." In the eighth paragraph of the same chapter of the same book, he thus formally defines original sin. "To remove all uncertainty and misunderstanding on this subject let us define original sin—I shall only produce one definition which I think perfectly consistent with the truth—Original sin therefore appears to be an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul; rendering us obnoxious to the divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls, works of the flesh. And this is indeed what Paul frequently denominates sin."

It is apparent that the composers of these two celebrated formularies, pursued different trains of metaphysical speculation, in tracing the connection between Adam's sin and its result, the destruction of his posterity; but as to every moral and religious result, the systems are one and the same; the same facts are stated in both; but there is a difference in the arrangement. The one party arrange their ideas thus: depravity—guilt—death; the other thus: guilt—depravity—and death.

What must have been their respective trains of reasoning? The following undoubtedly.

1. The first class of theologians believed that Adam's

sin corrupted human nature to the core, and that this corrupted nature was transmitted to his posterity: and that God, viewing each man born into the world as a corrupt creature, condemns him to death for his own individual want of conformity to the divine law. This was the view of Calvin, and of many other great and good men, whom I could name.

Perhaps it appeared to them, that a direct imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and a direct sentence of condemnation on them for that sin, would be inconsistent with the principles of retributive justice, or that it would appear harsh and repulsive to mankind. But, when the individual was depraved, and constitutionally opposed to the divine law, it appeared to them perfectly just, that he should be doomed to death, for his own inherent wickedness. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of every man;" whereby he is "very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; and, therefore, of every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

This, unquestionably, is the view entertained by many: I could produce the names of great and good men, and able theologians, who exclaim aloud against the *direct* imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, as contrary to all the principles of retributive justice, and all the perfections of deity; who, nevertheless, assert, that Adam's sin corrupted the nature of every man born unto this world, and that each is guilty before God, and condemned to death, on account of his want of conformity to the divine law.

2. The other class of theologians, seem to have argued in a different way; they seem to have considered depravity to be, as indeed it is, a most

awful calamity; and, therefore, they concluded that it was inconsistent with the divine justice, as well as the divine goodness, to suffer that calamity to be inflicted upon an *innocent* creature; they, therefore, view guilt as the antecedent, and moral cause, of depravity and death. They, consequently, say, that "the guilt of our first parents was imputed, and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by natural generation." They inform us, that original sin consists, 1. "In the guilt of Adam's first sin"—2. "In the want of original righteousness"—3. "In the corruption of the whole nature." It is plain, therefore, that these make guilt the antecedent, and moral cause, of depravity and death.

Let us compare these two systems together, in order to determine which of them communicates the greatest light, or involves the greatest difficulty.

The argument of the first system is this: It would be inconsistent with the justice of God, to impute the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, if they were personally pure; but, as they are personally impure, it is perfectly just that they should be personally condemned for that impurity.

The argument of the second system is this: Since depravity is itself a very great calamity, and leads to death the greatest of all calamities, it would be inconsistent with the justice of God, to permit that tremendous calamity to fall upon any moral creature, if it were not previously guilty of sin; therefore, the guilt of Adam's transgression is imputed to his posterity, and the want of original righteousness, the corruption of their nature, and death in sin, is the righteous consequence.

I leave it to the metaphysical theologians to decide, which of these two difficulties is the greater. I have, to the very utmost of my faculties, stated the two systems, and the reasonings which they necessarily involve, in the most luminous and candid manner I could. It may be, indeed, that very few who adopt these systems, have given themselves the trouble to analize the moral doctrines and logic, which enter into their composition. I hope I have not mistaken those doctrines, nor that logic. If otherwise, it is my misfortune, not my fault; for I once spent too much time and thought upon the subject.

The MORALIST, however, escapes the entanglements of both these systems of metaphysical arrangement. What is it to me, says he, how you arrange your ideas. Depravity, guilt, death—guilt, depravity, death. I am a sinner, and liable to eternal death; what do I care whether you name depravity before guilt, or guilt before depravity; since I am subject to both, and have nothing before me but the dreary prospect of the blackness of darkness for ever. Will a metaphysical analysis of this complex system of horrors, will a systematic arrangement of ideas, or a new technical phraseology, alter the nature of things? Indeed I cannot conceive what these theorists and verbologists are after. If you admit, that Adam's sin has brought his posterity into a state of sin and death, out of which they cannot redeem themselves; and out of which nothing can redeem them, but the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the efficacious work of his spirit; if this be conceded on both sides, in the name of God, what have you got to dispute about! I do not care about these physiological theories, concerning the cause and origin of my dis-

ease; it is the cure I want—what shall I do to be saved?

In the foregoing part of this work, the reader knows that I have entirely abstained from producing human authority in favour of the doctrines which I have advanced. This omission was dictated by many weighty considerations: on the one hand I take it to be derogatory to the Scriptures, to quote human authority, on subjects which they alone must determine; and, on the other hand, I thought it not very respectful to my readers, to suppose that they would be much influenced by such authority; justice requires, that if I threw the names of my men into one scale, I should permit my opponents to throw the names of their men into the other scale; and, the effect of this would be, to restore our old sober equilibrium of contradiction. Besides, it strikes me, that we are commanded to display a noble manly independence of character, in regard to our religion. We are so often commanded not to call other men Rabbins, nor to become Rabbins ourselves; neither to make ourselves lords over others, nor permit others to lord it over us in religious matters; we hear such lofty praises pronounced on those who suspended their faith, even when apostles preached the gospel, till they had searched the Scriptures, in order to determine whether what was taught them were consistent with that rule; we are so imperatively commanded to call none but Christ our master, that we are not tolerated to surrender our manly independence. Such surrender is not humility, but humiliation; it is making ourselves less than men, in order to make others more; it is a gratuitous and criminal degradation of that dignity of our nature, which God bestowed, and commands us to maintain.

Yet there are reasons, which render the production of the doctrines held, and taught by distinguished men, proper on some occasions, and even a necessary duty. It serves to display the unity and immutability of every thing which is true; and to show that those illustrious men, who have shone as the lights of their age, owed their distinction, neither to superiority of genius and talents, nor to the excellence of their learning; but, to the almighty influence of immortal truth. Immutable truth is, in fact, the attracting centre which retains those brilliant planets in their orbits, to distribute their light, and preside over the harmony of the world. The agreement of those master spirits in their testimony to truth, has great influence on the minds of most men, perhaps I might say all men. It may also be not amiss to notice, that there is, among the children of light, a much larger number engaged in giving circulation to the truth, than in the investigation of it. In the great mercy, and great wisdom of God, only a few are condemned to the mines, and to the mint; who are more to be pitied, than envied. The great number are merchants, who use coin assayed and stamped to their hand: some are wholesale traders, some retail; but all are active with the public; and, because they are publickly known, they are in credit; sometimes to the full amount of their capital, sometimes for more. To this class of men we owe great respect; they are the most immediately useful to the church, the most honoured, and the most beloved of any. Now, if these were to rise in a body against a theological publication, and exclaim—here is a new doctrine; it is not to be found in Luther, it is not to be found in Calvin; it is contrary to this creed, and that confession; it is not

the doctrine we have been in the habit of hearing; it is not what we are in the habit of teaching; we do not like this or any other novelty. I say, that such a declaration, from such men, would put down any publication.

It is, therefore, very natural for me, to feel a parental solicitude, and anxiety, about the fate of the present work. From the investigators I fear nothing; I consider myself, with them, perfectly safe. But, with the advocates of the circulating doctrines of the day, I do not think myself safe; I fear every thing from them; I have every thing to fear. If they try my coin by the standard of the circulating medium, I am gone: all is over, and I might as well not have written at all. I know well, that there are, in this book, things which vary from the present standard of orthodoxy; but I know that these things are novelties only in the same sense, in which a gold ring, worn by the emperor Vespasian, could be called a novelty—it had been so long lost, that it is quite new when it is found.

I owe it, therefore, to the truth; I owe it to the lovers of truth; I owe it to all who are engaged in the proclamation of truth; and I owe it to myself, as an investigator of truth; to show, that the main doctrines of this book, those upon which all its merit, or demerit, rest for their support, are no novelties; but the very truths which God has blessed in all ages, and the specific doctrines of the reformation. I shall show the public that they cannot put me down, without putting down Luther, without putting down Calvin, without putting down the whole of the reformation. Triumphant here, I shall then be out of danger.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE REFORMATION RESPECTING THE IMPUTABILITY OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO ALL MANKIND—LUTHER'S DOCTRINE—CALVIN'S DOCTRINE—THE DOCTRINE OF OTHER REFORMERS.

THE doctrine which I have taken so much pains to establish, namely that the atonement for sin made by Jesus Christ is, in its own nature, a full satisfaction to divine justice, for all the sins of all mankind; that it is capable of procuring pardon and eternal life for every one of them; and that their unbelief alone prevents it from having this effect; is, I am well aware, a doctrine much spoken against, in many parts of the Calvinistic churches. The very ample scriptural demonstration which I have given of it, ought to suffice; and certainly will suffice, for those who draw their religious faith directly from the Bible. I feel perfectly secure in the assurance, that no man ever will refute it by the Scriptures. I now proceed to show, that the same doctrine is, in fact, the very doctrine of the Reformation; as distinctly held, as clearly stated, as zealously defended, by Luther and Calvin, and other reformers, as any other part of the Christian faith.

LUTHER'S DOCTRINE.

Luther's sentiments on the subject in hand, may be collected from any of his writings; for so full was he

of the doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of Christ, freely offered to all sinners, that it occurs in almost every page of his works. I shall, however, confine myself to a few quotations from his celebrated commentary on the epistle to the Galatians. This work deserves particular attention. Luther chose the epistle to the Galatians, as furnishing a fair field for the full display of his favourite doctrine; and after having delivered two courses of lectures upon it, he published his commentary to the world; as containing his best, and most deliberate thoughts upon the subject. The very circumstance, that this treatise is a commentary on a book of Scripture, gives it a decided advantage over any theoretic publication of the same author; for with the word of inspiration lying open before him, and taxing his utmost ingenuity in the fear of God, to ascertain its meaning, he was less liable to mistakes, than in any other species of composition. The following are my quotations; and I beg leave to say, that the book should be in every Christian's hands.

Gal. i. 3. "I speak not this without cause, for I know what moveth me to be so earnest, that we should learn to define Christ out of the words of Paul. Wherefore if there be a sinner (as indeed we all are,) set not Christ down upon the rainbow, as a judge, (for so shalt thou be terrified and despair of his mercy,) but take hold of his true definition; namely, that Christ, the Son of God, and of the Virgin, is a person not that terrifieth, not that afflicteth, not that condemneth us of sin, not that condemneth us of our lives evil passed; but hath given himself for our sins, and with one oblation hath put away the sins of the whole world, hath fastened them to the cross, and put them quite out by himself."—Col. ii. 14.

"Learn this definition diligently, and especially to exercise this pronoun, OUR, that this one syllable being believed, may swallow up all thy sins; that thou mayest know assuredly that Christ hath taken away the sins, not of certain men only, but also of thee, and of the whole world. Then let not thy sins be sins only, but even thy own sins indeed; believe then that Christ was not only given for other men's sins, but also for thine. Hold this fast, and suffer not thyself to be drawn by any means from this most sweet definition of Christ; which rejoiceth even the very angels in heaven, that Christ, according to the true definition, is no Moses, no tyrant; but a Mediator for sins; a free giver of grace, righteousness, and life; who gave himself not for our merits, holiness, and righteousness, and godly life, but for our sins."

Again, "and this is the cause why I do so earnestly call upon you to learn the true and proper definition of Christ out of these words of Paul "who gave himself for our sins." If he gave himself to death for our sins, then undoubtedly he is no tyrant, or judge, who will condemn us for our sins; he is no caster down of the afflicted; but a raiser up of those that are fallen, a merciful reliever and comforter of the heavy and broken hearted; else Paul should lie in saying, who gave himself for our sins. If I define Christ thus, I define him rightly; and take hold of the true Christ, and possess him indeed. And here I let pass all curious speculations touching the divine majesty, and I stay myself in the humanity of Christ, and so I learn truly to know the will of God. Here is there no fear; but altogether sweetness, joy, peace of conscience, and such like. And herewithal, there is light opened which sheweth me the true knowledge of God, of my-

self, of all creatures, and all the iniquity of the devil's kingdom. We teach no new thing, but we repeat and establish old things, which the apostles and all godly teachers, have taught before us. And would to God we could so teach and establish them, that we might not only have them in our mouth, but also well grounded in the bottom of our heart, and especially that we might be able to use them in the agony and conflict of death."

Chap. iii. 12. And the law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them.

"Hereby it appeareth that the doctrine of the gospel (which of all others is most sweet, and full of singular consolation) speaketh nothing of our works of the law; but of the inestimable love and mercy of God towards us most wretched and miserable sinners; viz. that our most merciful Father, seeing us to be oppressed, and overwhelmed, with the curse of the law; and so to be holden under the same, that we could never be delivered from it, by our own power; sent his only Son into the world, and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying: be thou Peter, that denier; Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, and cruel oppressor; David, that adulterer; that sinner that did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief, who was hanged on the cross; and briefly that person who hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them. Here now cometh the law, and saith, I find him a sinner; and that such an one, as hath taken upon him the sins of all men; and I see no sins else but in him; therefore let him die upon the cross; and so he setteth upon him, and killeth him. By this means the whole world is purged, and cleansed from all sins, and so delivered from death and all evils. Now sin being van-

quished, and death being vanquished, by this one man; God would see nothing else in the whole world, if it did believe, but a perfect cleansing righteousness. And if any remnants of sin should remain, yet for the great glory that is in Christ, God would wink at them and would not see them."

I confess my whole soul is fired, on reading such a passage as this. This is no hasty thought, no rash speech of that master spirit. It is his deliberate opinion, it is his principle, it is his faith; expressed with a boldness of imagery, and an energy of eloquence, which no mortal man would dare to use, who was not conscious that he had won the truth from all the hosts of hell, by the power and spirit of the Lord Jesus.

And therefore be it known, to those who know it not, that Martin Luther, that only not inspired man, whom the Lord Jesus raised up with semi-apostolic unction, to save his church from annihilation, did maintain that the atonement made by the Son of God on Calvary, is competent to effect the salvation of all mankind; and that nothing is wanting to render it universally efficacious, but the sinner's faith.

It would be very possible for a man of words to criticise the language of the reformer; but it would be a mean and ungracious achievement. His doctrine decisively was, that the Son of God made atonement for all the sins of all mankind; the proper idea and definition of him is this, that "He gave himself for our sins;" that his character is that of a "Mediator for sins;" and therefore sin "being thus vanquished, and death being vanquished by this one man, God would see nothing in the whole world; if they did believe, but a perfect cleansing righteousness." The conclusion is that the doctrine which I have laboured to establish, in

the foregoing part of this work, is no innovation on the church's faith; but the doctrine of Luther, the doctrine of the reformation, the very doctrine which effected the reformation. An opportunity will hereafter present itself for proving, that the modern theory which asserts, that the atonement of Christ is exactly proportioned to the sins of the elect, and incapable of procuring salvation for any others, is a thing of yesterday, which has never produced any thing in the church of God but strife, controversy, error and distraction. At present we must attend to the doctrine of Calvin.

CALVIN'S DOCTRINE.

There is a misfortune in being great, and it originates equally, with a man's friends, and his enemies. The one impute to him, whatever they want his authority to support; the other charge him with whatever they are prepared to refute. It is matter of great notoriety, that the theological opponents of Calvin have in many instances ascribed to him opinions which he never held; but it is not, perhaps, so generally known, that some of the warm and professed admirers of Calvin, who boast his name with almost exclusive pretensions, have ranked under the general title of Calvinistic doctrine, opinions which that man not only never entertained, but which are decidedly contrary, and hostile, to doctrines upon which he set the highest value. Among the principles falsely thus imputed to Calvin, is the modern notion, that the atonement of Jesus, instead of being competent to secure the salvation of mankind, is in its own nature incapable of saving any but the elect. I do not know, however, that a single sentence

has been quoted from his writings, to fasten down this opinion upon him. It will be sufficient therefore, if I produce a few passages from his works, which prove that he held an opinion directly contrary to that which has been ascribed to him; and that he was in fact, a strenuous asserter of the doctrine that the blood of Christ was shed for all mankind, and is capable of saving the whole human race; and that faith on the part of men, alone is wanting to effect the salvation of the whole family of Adam.

I shall quote both from his INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, and from his COMMENTARIES. The Institutes, or rather an imperfect outline of that work, was written and published by Calvin in his youth, about the twenty-fifth year of his age; partly for the purpose of communicating the christian faith to his countrymen, the French; many of whom, as he informs us, in his dedication of the work to Francis the first, king of France, were thirsting after Christ, while few possessed any real knowledge of him; and partly for the purpose of vindicating those who embraced the cause of the reformation, from the foul aspersions and slanders, which had been cast on them by their enemies, and which were exposing them to cruel persecutions. But when, he afterwards found, that his work, had obtained a popularity, which he had not expected; and after he had become a DOCTOR,* in the reformed ranks; he thought that he ought, to render it as perfect as he could. The first draught was formed on the apostle's creed, and was intended to show that the reformers were willing to be bounded by that creed; and that they in fact advanced nothing, which was not included in that formulary.

* The ancient title for a Professor of divinity.

The Institutes underwent many editions, in each of which the work was altered and amended by the author. During the time he was working upon it, he was also engaged in expounding the Holy Scriptures, and in examining the history and antiquities of the christian church. Accordingly, as might be expected, every new discovery of scriptural doctrine was transferred to its appropriate head in the Institutes; and every corruption of christianity, which the author's reading discovered, had a similar destination. In the year 1559, twenty three years after the first impression, he put the finishing hand to his work, and published it in Latin and French, with his last corrections and additions. The Institutes may be considered as the work of Calvin's life; and when we view such a man, working in such a manner, it will not appear extraordinary, that the work itself is the most various, and most profound system, of Christian theology, of antiquarian research, and of moral argument, that his or any other age can produce. It became the text-book of all the theological schools of the reformed over Europe; and, I am sorry to add; that it became almost the Bible of the Reformed Church. It is, in fact, worth all the systems of theology ever published in the Reformed Churches. After all this just praise, I must say, that the author intended it for purposes, and that it has served purposes, which in my conscience I cannot approve. His words are these: "Now my design in this work has been, to prepare and qualify students of theology for the reading of the divine word, that they may have an easy introduction to it, and be enabled to proceed in it without any obstruction. For I think I have given such a com-

prehensive summary, and orderly arrangement of all the branches of religion, that with proper attention, no person will find any difficulty in determining, what ought to be the principal objects of his research in the Scripture, and to what end he ought to refer any thing it contains." That is, in plain terms, Calvin's Institutes shall be the spectacles, through which students of theology shall read the Bible. In all my littleness, and insignificance, I protest against this! A true commentator reads and studies the Scriptures for himself; he wants no doctor, no professor, to teach him what he is to search for in the Bible; nor to direct him to what purpose he shall apply what he may discover in it. He searches the Scriptures to find what God has put in them, the whole if it be possible; at any rate, all that is in his power. I am even of opinion, and decidedly so, that Calvin would have excelled his mighty self, as a commentator, if he had not written the Institutes. It is with pain, and depression of spirits, that I say these things; because I much venerate the man, and mean to produce his authority, so far as the judgment of an uninspired man is entitled to be urged, in support of the main doctrines of this publication.

A single word on the Commentaries of Calvin, before I proceed to quotations. They are unquestionably the best, take them all in all, which any man ever has produced. And as his Institutes are the reservoir, from which all systematic divines since his day, have drawn the materials of their systems; so his Commentaries are the reservoirs, from which commentators have derived their most valuable interpretations of the Scriptures. Let us know then,

how to prize this man, whom God made so great; but let us, at the same time, remember that we have the same Bible and the same Spirit, which he had; and that we are bound by the authority of Jehovah to examine and to know for ourselves.

The following are my quotations from Calvin.

Institutes, book second, paragraph first. "It is not without reason, therefore, that Paul when about to exhibit Christ in the character of a Mediator, expressly speaks of him as a man. 'There is one Mediator,' he says, 'between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus.' He might have called him God, or might indeed have omitted the appellation of man, as well as that of God; but because the spirit who spoke by him, knew our infirmity, he hath provided a very suitable remedy against it, by placing the Son of God familiarly among us, as though he were one of us. Therefore, that no man may distress himself where he is to seek the Mediator, or in what way he may approach him, the apostle by denominating him a man, apprizes us that he is near, and even close to us, since he is our own flesh. He certainly intends the same: as is stated in another place more at large, 'that we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.'"

Here he says that Paul expressed himself purposely for the sake of giving encouragement to human infirmity in seeking salvation. He says that Paul calls the mediator a MAN, in order that men seeing him to be one in their own flesh, might be encouraged to trust in him. Now if this be good ground of encouragement to any man, it is equally good to all men.

Paragraph third. "Another branch of our reconciliation with God was this, that man who had ruined himself by his own disobedience, should remedy his condition by obedience, should satisfy the justice of God, and suffer the punishment of his sin. Our Lord then made his appearance, as a real man, he put on the character of ADAM, and assumed his name, to act as HIS SUBSTITUTE, in his obedience to the Father, to lay down our flesh, as the price of satisfaction to the justice of God, and to suffer the punishment which we had deserved, in the same nature in which the offence had been committed. As it would have been impossible, therefore, for one who was only God to suffer death, or for one who was a mere man to overcome it, he associated the human nature with the divine, that he might submit the weakness of the former to death, as an atonement for sins, and that with the power of the latter he might contend with death, and obtain a victory on our behalf. Those who despoil Christ, therefore, either of his divinity, or his humanity, either diminish his glory, or obscure his goodness. Nor are they, on the other hand, less injurious to men; whose faith they weaken and subvert, since it cannot stand any longer, than it rests upon this foundation. Moreover, the Redeemer to be expected, was that son of Abraham, and David, whom God had promised in the law and the prophets. Hence the minds of the faithful derive another advantage, because, from the circumstance of his ancestry being traced to David, and to Abraham, they have an additional assurance that this is the Christ, who was celebrated in so many prophecies. But we should particularly remember, what I have just stated, that our common nature is a pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God; that

clothed in our flesh, he vanquished sin and death, in order that the victory and triumph might be ours; that the flesh which he received from us, he offered up in the sacrifice, in order to expiate and obliterate our guilt, and appease the just wrath of the Father."

This passage leaves no doubt, that it was the deliberate doctrine of Calvin, that the satisfaction of Christ is sufficient to effect the salvation of all mankind. He says that the Son of God "put on the character of Adam;" and assumed his name; to act as HIS SUBSTITUTE, in his obedience to the Father. It is not worth a remark, that he does not, and cannot, consider Adam as an INDIVIDUAL, but as a representative, or a covenant head; or by whatever name you may choose to call the man, who acts in the name of a community; and whose actions are to effect the moral relations of the whole. Now I appeal to every sound deliberative thinker, whether it is not the doctrine of Calvin, that whatever evil the misconduct of Adam has brought into our world; the good conduct of Jesus Christ is capable of driving out of our world. As to the peculiarity of a remedial system—that it requires the personal assent of every individual who is to profit by it, I have said enough already.

Calvin says, that our common nature is a pledge of our fellowship with the Son of God—that the flesh which he received from us, he offered up as a sacrifice, in order to obliterate our guilt, and appease the just wrath of the Father.*

* I shall give the original which is less liable to minute exceptions. "Sed illud quod nuper exposui, præcipue tenendum est; communem naturam pignus esse nostræ cum filio Dei societatis: carne nostra vestitum, debellasse mortem cum peccato, ut nostra esset victoria, et triumphus noster, ut facta expiatione, reatum nostrum deleret, et placaret justam patris iram.

Paragraph fourth of the same chapter. "As a sufficient specimen of all, we refer to that very celebrated testimony of Isaiah, where he predicts, that he should be smitten of God for the transgression of his people, that the chastening of their peace might be upon him, and that he should be a priest to offer up himself as a victim; that by his stripes others should be healed;" and that, because "all men had gone astray, and been dispersed like sheep, it would please the Lord to afflict him, and to lay on him the iniquity of us all."*

Chapter thirteenth, paragraph first. "The arguments for the divinity of Christ, which has already been proved by clear and irrefragable testimonies, it would, I conceive, be unnecessary to reiterate. It remains, then, for us to examine, how, after having been invested with our flesh, he has performed the office of a mediator. Now, the reality of his humanity was opposed by the Manicheans and by the Marcionites. Of whom the latter imagined to themselves a visionary phantom, instead of the body of Christ; and the former dreamed that he had a celestial body. But both those notions are contrary to numerous and powerful testimonies of Scripture. For the blessing is promised neither in a heavenly seed, nor in a phantom of a man; but in the seed of Abraham and Jacob; nor is the eternal throne promised to an aerial man, but to the son of David, and the fruit of his loins. Therefore on his manifestation in the flesh, he is called the son of David, and of Abraham, not because he was merely born

* Et quia omnes erraverunt, et instar ovium fuerunt dispersi, placuisse deo illum affligere, ut omnium iniquitates ferret.

of the virgin, after having been formed of some aerial substance; but because according to Paul, he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, as the same apostle in another place informs us, that 'according to the flesh,' he descended from the Jews. Wherefore the Lord himself not content with the appellation of MAN, frequently calls himself also 'THE SON OF MAN,' a term which was intended as a more express declaration of his real humanity. As the Holy Spirit has on so many occasions, by so many instruments, and with such great diligence and simplicity, declared a fact by no means abstruse in itself, who could have supposed, that any mortals would have such consummate impudence as to dare to obscure it with subtleties? But more testimonies offer themselves, if we wished to multiply them; such as this of Paul, 'That God sent forth his Son made of a woman,' and innumerable others, from which he appears to have been liable to hunger, thirst, cold, and other infirmities of our nature. But from the multitude we must chiefly select those, which may conduce to the edification of our minds in true faith: as when it is said that 'he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham;' that he took flesh and blood, 'that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death:' for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, that 'in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest'—that 'we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities:' and the like to the same purpose is what we have just before mentioned, that it was necessary for the sins of the

WORLD, to be expiated in our flesh; which is clearly asserted by Paul."

To one who has read the works of Calvin, the above quotations will appear more than was required by the necessity of the case. But the writings of Calvin are extremely scarce in this country; and hence there may be some to whom it will be information, to be told that Luther, and Calvin, and Arminius, all harmonized on the doctrine of the universality of the atonement made for sin by the Son of God: that is, they maintained that the atonement is of such merit, worth, and efficacy, as to be capable of washing out all the sins of all mankind; and that faith on their part, is the only thing wanting to render it effectual to the salvation of them all. And it is upon this universal atonement, that they found the universal offer of salvation to sinful men: they had no idea of offering in Christ's name, what Christ had not to bestow: they had no notion of pledging his credit for more than he was worth.

I shall just quote a single passage to show what were Calvin's views of the universality of the gospel call, and its connection with the ability of the Son of God to save the whole world: and to diversify the reader's entertainment, the quotation shall be taken from his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

Rom. i. 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

"But observe how much Paul attributes to the ministry of the word, when he testifies that God therein puts forth his own power for salvation: for he does not in this place speak of any secret revelation, but of the

vocal preaching of the word, whence it follows, that they who withdraw themselves from the preaching of the word do, as it were, with all their might, contemptuously reject the power of God, and repel far from them his delivering hand. Since, however, the gospel does not operate efficaciously on all, but only where the spirit, that internal instructor, enlightens their minds; he therefore adds, to every one that believeth. Indeed the gospel is offered to all men for salvation; but its efficacy does not appear in all. In respect to its becoming the savour of death to the impious however; that does not proceed, as well from its nature, as from their wickedness. By pointing out a single salvation, he cuts off all other ground of hope. While they withdraw themselves from that single salvation, they have in the gospel a certain manifestation of their own destruction. Therefore seeing the gospel invites all indifferently to salvation; it is properly called the doctrine of salvation, for therein Christ is offered whose proper office is to save that which was lost. But those who refuse to be saved by him, shall meet him as their Judge. Moreover, the term salvation is every where in scripture opposed to simple destruction. When therefore this term is used we must consider the subject treated of. Consequently, since the gospel delivers us from the ruin and malediction of eternal death, its salvation is eternal life—"To the Jew first and also to the Greek."—Under the name of Greeks he comprehends all Gentile nations in existence, as may be seen by considering the connection of the sentence: in which he has thought proper to comprise all mankind under two classes. But it is very likely he selected the Greeks to designate all Gentile nations, because that they, next after the Jews, were introduced into the

communion of the evangelical covenant; and again, because that the Greeks on account of their vicinity, and the general prevalence of their language, were better known to the Jews. It is therefore a synecdoche, by which he connects all nations in general with the Jews, in the participation of the gospel. Yet he does not detrude the Jews from their proper rank and precedence; since they were first both in the promise and in the vocation, but without delay he joins the Gentiles with them as fellow-heirs, although in an inferior rank!

I shall quote one passage more; it is from his commentary on the first epistle of John: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* In explaining the phrase "whole world," he says of some theologians "dixerunt sufficienter pro toto mundo passum esse Christum, sed pro electis tantum efficaciter," that is "Christ has made a sufficient expiation for the whole world; but an efficacious expiation for the elect only." The meaning of this mode of expression is obvious, namely that the satisfaction of Christ is sufficient to save the whole world, but is effectual in securing salvation to the elect only. Why? Because the elect only rest upon it by faith. This is the doctrine which Calvin maintains, in his commentary on the passage already quoted from the epistle to the Romans. The doctrine of Calvin in all his writings is, that it is not as elect, but as believers, that these persons are justified by the righteousness of Christ. They were elect from all eternity, but so long as they continued in unbelief they remained under con-

* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

demnation and wrath; so soon as they believed, their sins were remitted, and their persons accepted as righteous in the sight of God. Calvin acknowledges that this was the doctrine received in the schools of theology: *Vulgo hæc solutio in scholis obtinuit;* and sets his own seal to it as true.

It is however required by candour and ingenuousness, to state explicitly, that though Calvin does assert that the expiation made by Christ is sufficient to save the whole world; yet he affirms that this passage of Scripture has nothing to do with that doctrine. By the phrase "whole world," he understands the christian church, and not the entire human family. These are his words. "But although I confess that that assertion is true; yet I deny that it has any connection with the sense of this passage. For the intention of John was no other, than to represent this blessing as common to the whole church. Therefore under the word ALL, he does not include reprobates."*

It may to some appear, that it would have been more to my interest not to have quoted this passage; all, however, must admit that no guile, or disingenuous address, has been displayed by keeping it back. For my own part, I take this passage to be a most decisive proof, that Calvin maintained the doctrine of universal atonement; or that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is sufficient to save the whole human family; yet I had an additional reason for producing this quotation, which I will now with all simplicity declare. To quote an author fairly is not so easy a matter, as some men take it to be; but to reason fairly from quotations, is one of

* Ego quanquam verum esse illud dictum fateor; nego tamen presenti loco quadrare. Neque enim aliud fuit consilium Joannis, quam toti Ecclesiæ commune facere hoc bonum. Ergo sub omnibus reprobos non comprehendit, &c."

the most difficult tasks imaginable; and requires more coolness and sobriety of judgment, than most men are aware of. Might it not be possible to find a man incautious enough, to infer that Calvin did not believe, that the atonement of Jesus was sufficient for the salvation of the whole world—from the fact, that he interprets the phrase "whole world," in this passage, as meaning the church to the exclusion of the reprobate; by which name he designates, in this place, the unelected? If my memory serves me, I have more than a few times heard such inferences. Yet they are illogical and unsound. Calvin does explicitly assert, that Jesus Christ made a sufficient atonement for the whole world—though he maintains that "whole world" in this passage is not to be understood in that extensive sense. If therefore any one finds that Calvin frequently in his Commentaries limits this, and similar general phrases, to only a part of the human family, he must not therefore infer, that Calvin denied the universal nature of the atonement; or maintained that the blood of Jesus is incapable of washing away all the sins of all mankind. For Calvin maintained the affirmative side of this question. This is a matter of fact! and must not be argued away by logical inferences.

It is written, "Buy the truth and sell it not:" I therefore cannot drop this subject yet. With all possible deference and humility, but with no less decision and firmness, I must examine whether Calvin's interpretation of this passage of Scripture be correct. Why should the phrase "whole world" in this text, be restricted to the church? why should it be restricted at all? why should it mean less than the whole human family? Calvin has not given us his reasons for this restriction, and I feel myself totally

incapable of imagining any reason whatever. I must therefore interpret the passage for myself.

John certainly is writing directly to christians, to the whole church of God; and knowing that, through the infirmity of our nature, even such men commit sin, he exhibits to them the remedy of this evil, and consolation against despair. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sin;" for the sins of all christians, of the whole church of God; unto whom coming with renewed faith, we shall obtain renewed pardon, and return into peace and communion with God. If John had intended to restrict the propitiation for sin to the church, he would have stopped here; for he has already said all that can be said, or conceived, concerning her interest in it. But he does not stop here: he has much more to say concerning that propitiation, redounding equally to the glory of his master, and the consolation of the human kind. Jesus Christ the righteous, says he, "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Such is the propitiation for sin made by Christ, that it is adequate to save not the church alone, but the whole world. This is his meaning: what else can he mean? Every one owns that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the church—Aye! but says John, he is also the propitiation for the sins of the whole world: here there is a beautiful climax, if you understand the phrase "whole world," in its natural sense, as including the whole human family. But if by the phrase "whole world" you mean the "whole church of God:" then I beg you to tell me

the meaning of the following sentence. Jesus Christ the righteous, is the propitiation for the sins of the whole church of God—and not the propitiation for the sins of the whole church of God only—But also the propitiation for the sins of the whole church of God. Now is this sense, or nonsense!

The apostle whose writings are engrossed in the Sacred Scriptures, remains an apostle till the end of the world. The man is dead, but the apostle liveth; and continueth to preach the gospel to every creature in all generations. The apostle John has been preaching the gospel, from his own day, down through all ages to the present; and will be preaching the gospel, through all future ages, down till the end of time. To all these generations of men he preached the same doctrine.

To the church in his own age, John said: "Little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

To us in this age, John is preaching the gospel, and saying: "Little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

And in that last age, when the archangel will be standing ready to sound the trumpet, which closes the dispensation of pardoning mercy among men; after the last christian convert shall have been gathered into the church, then in that last and awful hour, John

will still be preaching to the church, and saying: "Little children these things write I unto you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only; but for the sins of the whole world." There will at that time be sinners on earth; from among whom not one will ever be converted to Jesus. Yet Jesus Christ is still the propitiation for the sins of christians—for the sins of the church—and again for the sins of the "whole world." Who then are the "whole world," after all the elect are gathered in? Oh! Then there will be no subterfuge for tergiversating speculations! Even then Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole church of God; and for the sins of the whole world—that is the propitiation for the sins of all mankind.

I assert then, that "whole world," in this text, is to be taken in its literal meaning, as including every individual of the human family. I assert, that this is the meaning which the Holy Ghost has infused into the passage: I assert, that no other meaning can be assigned, which will not render the proposition false, and the phraseology absurd. I therefore urge this text, as a decisive proof of my main doctrine—while, in the mean time, I have proved, that Calvin held the main doctrine, though by misunderstanding this text, he denied that the doctrine was taught in it. And, if he should misunderstand the meaning of some general terms, in some other texts, (as, it must be owned, he does) I protest against the injustice to him, and the injury to the truth, which would be done, by inferring, from that circumstance, that he did not believe that the righteousness of the Son of God, is

capable of saving all mankind. He did believe, that the righteousness of the Son of God is capable of saving all mankind—and those who are familiar with his writings, know that this was his doctrine; and they have never affected to conceal the fact. For one, I glory in the fact, that such a man as Calvin did see, and did proclaim, the glory of the remedial system—full and free salvation for all mankind, in the blood of the Son of God.

In my printed proposals, I promised to lay before my readers, the doctrine taught in the confessions of the reformed churches, on the subject treated in the present work. It was the only thing promised, which was not, actually, in manuscript: and it is, with no small mortification, that I am now obliged to apologize for my inability to gratify the expectations which I may have excited. I imagined that there could be no difficulty in procuring a copy of the *Syntagma Confessionum*—or collection of confessions of faith; yet I have, after making great search for it, been entirely unsuccessful. It is necessary to mention this circumstance, trifling as it may appear, least any of my readers should suspect that I may have kept back the confessions, as not favouring my doctrines; a piece of disingenuousness, of which I should not wish to be suspected by any body. My opinion was, that those confessions, with, perhaps, one or two exceptions, expressly support my views of the extent of the atonement. But, if they had all been decisively against me, so far from concealing the fact from my readers, I should have quoted all such hostile authorities; and, I would neither have blushed, nor trembled, to undertake their refutation. But, as things are, I shall, on my own account, adopt the resolution of being

more cautious how I pledge myself to the public; and by way of peace offering to my readers, I will lay before them the doctrine of some others, among the great Reformers; to show that in pleading for the universality of the propitiation made for sin by the Son of God, I am doing no more than speaking the unequivocal language of the reformation.

John Wickliffe the famous commencer of reformation in England, flourished during the middle of the fourteenth century. He was professor of theology in the university of Cambridge, and a man every way distinguished. He possessed a powerful genius, and extensive learning. To a judgment at once acute and sound, he had joined the acquisitions of logical skill, and stood at the head of all the logicians of his day. An excellent temper, refined wit, and versatile eloquence, threw a charm around the substantial structure of his manly character, which they supported while they adorned. He was made for a reformer; every thing he touched was improved by his polishing hand. In conjunction with his contemporary, Geoffry Chaucer, he had the honour of being one of the earliest improvers of the English language, which he wrote and spoke with uncommon propriety. He wrote a great deal; but the subject upon which his labours were more particularly expended, was the translation of the Holy Scriptures into his native language. It is nothing wonderful, that such a man, thus employed, should become a brilliant star in so dark a night as at that time inveloped Christendom. It was impossible for him to operate on society at all, without producing reformation; he could not move without treading down some of the prevailing abuses; he could not act without demolishing some structure of superstition.

But as my object is merely to show what were his views upon the subject, which I am discussing, I abstain from any farther general remarks on his character, and content myself with the following decisive declaration of his principles. "The merit of Christ is of itself sufficient to redeem every man from hell. It is to be understood of a sufficiency OF ITSELF, without any other concurring cause. All that follow Christ, being justified by his righteousness, shall be saved as his offspring." No human language can express more exactly the doctrine of the present treatise, that these words of John Wickliffe. "The merit of Christ is sufficient to redeem every man from hell," so said Wickliffe, so say I. And that the efficacy of this merit depends on faith, we both maintain. "All that follow Christ being justified by his righteousness, shall be saved as his offspring." Nor is this any very wonderful coincidence of views, between the living and the dead; the wonder lies entirely in the opposite direction; namely, how it happens that any one who reads the Bible, should think differently on this subject.

But perhaps some may suspect, that Wickliffe may not have been enlightened on the subject of election; nothing can be farther from the truth than this supposition. He was a determined predestinarian, and on the subject of the divine decress and agency, used language far too strong for the present prevailing opinions. In respect to predestination he held, "that the grace of predestination is the band werewith the body of the church, and every member of the same is indissolubly joined to Christ their head." No language can be more precise or stronger, to limit the ultimate efficacy of Christ's merit to the number

of the predestinated. It is to be considered farther, that Wickliffe held opinions respecting divine agency, little, if any thing, short of fatalism. He actually calls God a necessary agent, and argues about divine decrees, and divine agency, till even TOPLADY himself trembles and shrinks back. But notwithstanding his opinion, about predestination and divine sovereignty; he maintained that "the merit of Christ is of itself sufficient to save every man from hell. He did not imagine that the merit of Christ was limited to the predestinated; he believed it to be of itself sufficient to redeem every man from hell. Predestination is connected with the gift of faith, which gives the sinner a participation in the merit of Christ's atonement. But the merit itself stands distinct from, and independent of the believer's faith; whether the righteousness of Christ be accepted by faith, or rejected by unbelief, it is still the same, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Let us here close our remarks on the doctrine of Wickliffe. He was overpowered and borne down; he was stripped of his offices, banished from his university, and driven into the obscurity of private life, in which he died; the judgment day will declare the rest.

THOMAS CRANMER was an original reformer, who crept slowly, and by degrees, out of the trammels of idolatry and superstition; but having had the misfortune to be archbishop of Canterbury, and a minister of state, he has left some stains on his memory, which the humane will strive to forget. He was the chief instrument of all that merited the name of reformation in the anomalous innovation effected by that infernal reformer, Henry the eighth. During the infantine reign of Edward the sixth, Cranmer

was in fact the first magistrate of Britain; and promoted reformation, by inviting to England, and establishing in its universities, many learned foreigners, among whom we find the distinguished names of Martin Bucer, Paulus Fagius, and Peter Martyr.

Early in the reign of Bloody Mary, Cranmer was burned at the stake. He had been seduced into a recantation of the reformed doctrine, but was doomed to the stake, notwithstanding, as a monument of the signal vengeance which was to pursue heresy, and an object of contempt both to friends and enemies; at the same time a renegado from his faith, and a victim for professing it. It was a sermon preached before him by a Dr. Cole, preparatory to this bloody sacrifice to the Moloch of bigotted tyranny, which conveyed to the archbishop the first intimation, that his enemies having by base intrigues and flattery, robbed him of a good conscience, by betraying him into a recantation of his real sentiments, had determined to quench the remembrance of his former virtues in his blood. During the whole sermon he sat bathed in tears, alternately casting his eyes up towards heaven for mercy, and down to the ground in the confusion of conscious guilt. When the sermon was ended, he was called on to make a confession of his faith, and give the world satisfaction of his dying a good catholic. He eagerly seized the occasion of disburdening his conscience; recanted his former recantation; avowed his adherence to the reformed doctrine; and declared that the right hand which had signed his Lord's dishonour and his own shame, should first endure the fire. Having finished his speech, he threw himself upon his knees, and pronounced the following most pathetic prayer:

"O Father of heaven; O Son of God, Redeemer of the world; O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them both; three persons, and one God; have mercy upon me, most wretched caitiff and miserable sinner! I! who have offended both heaven and earth, and more grievously than tongue can express! Whither then should I go, or where shall I flee for succour! To heaven I am ashamed to lift up my eyes; and on earth I find no refuge! What shall I then do? Shall I despair? God forbid! O good God, thou art merciful, and refuseth none, who come unto thee for succour: To thee therefore do I run; to thee do I humble myself; saying, O Lord, my God, my sins be great, but yet have mercy upon me for thy infinite mercy! O God the Son, thou wast not made man, this great mystery was not wrought, for few or small offences only; neither didst thou give thy Son to die, O God the Father, for our smaller crimes, but for the greatest sins of the whole world, so that the sinner return unto thee with a penitent heart, as I do now in this moment: Wherefore take pity on me, O Lord, whose property is always to have mercy; for though my sins be great, yet thy mercy is greater,—I crave nothing, O Lord, for my own merits, but for thy name's sake, and that it may be glorified thereby, and for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake; in whose words I conclude: Our Father, &c."

Thus it appears that this martyr, in moments awfully solemn, while just about to appear before his God to give an account of his stewardship, bore a dying testimony to the truth that Jesus died for the "greatest sins of the whole world:" which is the very doctrine I maintain.

James Usher, the celebrated primate of Ireland, *Hinc usque ad sidera notus,* is the last that I shall quote. He lived, indeed, a little too late, to be ranked among the original reformers. But the boundless compass of his mind, and his immense erudition, united as they were with the purest piety and most exalted virtue, entitle him to be named with the foremost worthies. If ever, since the death of the apostles, any man lived, whose judgment respecting what is, or ought to be, the doctrine of the christian church, merits regard; James Usher was the man. He has taken his stand, acknowledgedly, at the head of all ecclesiastical scholars, and happy may that age esteem itself, which shall produce a man to turn him down. He lived, also, in an age of great spirits, and great events; and thought, and wrote, and acted, among them, with the mild and energetic dignity of a man made for the human race. I shall give a quotation from two letters written by him about the time of the Synod of Dort, on the subject of the extent of Christ's satisfaction. I need hardly say, indeed to theological readers it would be no information, that archbishop Usher was a thorough-going Calvinist of the old school; that is, that from his analysis of the Scriptures, he deduced the same system of doctrine, which Calvin did. My quotation is as follows:

"This question hath been moved *sub iisdem terminis quibus nunc,* and hath received contrary resolutions. The reason is, that in the two extremities of opinions held in this matter, there is somewhat true, and somewhat false. The one extremity extends the benefit of Christ's satisfaction too far; as if hereby God, for his part, were actually reconciled to all mankind, and did really discharge every man from all his

sins; and that the reason why all men do not reap the fruit of this benefit, is the want of that faith whereby they ought to have believed, that God in this sort did love them: whence it would follow, that God should forgive a man his sins, and justify him before he believed; whereas the elect themselves, before their effectual vocation, are said to be without Christ and without hope, and to be utter strangers from the covenants of promise. Eph. ii. 12.

"2dly. The other extremity contracts the riches of Christ's satisfaction into too narrow a room, as if none had any kind of interest therein, but such as were elected before the foundation of the world; howsoever by the gospel every one be charged to receive the same; whereby it would follow, that a man should be bound in conscience to believe that which is untrue, and charged to take that wherewith he hath nothing to do.—Both extremities then, drawing with them unavoidable absurdities; the word of God (by hearing whereof faith is begotten, Eph. i. 13.) must be sought unto by a middle course, to avoid those extremities.

"For finding out this middle course, we must in the the matter of our redemption, carefully put a distinction between the satisfaction of Christ absolutely considered, and the application thereof to every one in particular. The former was once done for all, the other is still in doing. The former brings with it sufficiency abundant to discharge the whole debt; the other adds to its efficacy. The satisfaction of Christ only makes the sins of mankind fit for pardon, which without it could not well be, the injury done to God's majesty being so great, that it could not stand with his honour, to put it up without amends made. The particular

application makes the sins of those to whom that mercy is vouchsafed to be actually pardoned: for as all sins are mortal, in regard of the stipend due thereunto by the law, but all do not actually bring forth death, because the gracious promises of the gospel stayeth the execution; even so all the sins of mankind are become venial, in respect of the price paid by Christ to his Father, so far, that in shewing mercy upon all, if so it were his pleasure, his justice should be no loser; but all do not attain actual remission, because most offenders do not take out, nor plead their pardon, as they ought to do.

"Our blessed Saviour, by that which he hath performed on his part, hath procured a jubilee for the sons of Adam, and his gospel is the trumpet whereby he doth proclaim liberty to the captives, and preacheth the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke iv. 18, 19. If for all this some are so well pleased with their captivity, that they desire no deliverance, that derogates nothing from the generality of the freedom annexed to that year.

"The main error of the Arminians and of the patrons of universal grace, is this, that God offereth unto every man those means that are necessary unto salvation, both sufficiently and effectually; and that it resteth in the free will of every one to receive or reject the same. For the proof hereof they allege, as their predecessors, the semipelagians did before them, that received axiom of Christ's dying for all men; which being rightly understood, makes nothing for their purpose. Some of their opposites, subject to oversights as well as others, more forward herein than circumspect, have answered this objection, not by expounding, as was fit, but by flatly denying that famous axiom; affirming

peremptorily, that Christ died only for the elect and for others *nullo modo;* whereby they gave the adverse party advantage to drive them unto this extreme absurdity, viz. that seeing Christ in no wise died for any, but for the elect, and all men were bound to believe that Christ died for themselves, and that upon pain of damnation for the contrary infidelity; therefore all men were bound to believe that they themselves were elected, although in truth the matter were nothing so."

I shall here terminate my quotations; begging my reader's pardon, for having so much superabounded in them; but, the careless confidence with which every age ascribes its own foolish inventions, to an honorable origin, has been the cause of imputing, to Calvin, and others, a great many doctrines, and opinions, which they never held, or, perhaps, heard of. Having now satisfied every candid reader, I hope, that the doctrine, which, in the former chapters of this work, I demonstrated to be scriptural, I have, in this chapter, proved to be the doctrine of Luther and Calvin, and, consequently, the doctrine of the reformation, it is but just and reasonable to expect, that no man will charge me with corrupting the doctrine of the reformation; or troubling the church with novel speculations and opinions. Whatever may be thought of the soundness of my doctrine, it is the real old doctrine of the reformation; and, in asserting and maintaining it, I claim it as my just due, from all mankind, to be, (in so far) as evangelical in principle as Martin Luther, of Wirtemburg; and, as sound a Calvinist as John Calvin, of Geneva.

There is an original reformer, whose works I have sought in vain—the noble Zuinglius. Could his writings have been procured, I have no doubt, they would

have furnished me with testimonies in favour of my doctrine, as ample, clear, and decisive, as those which have been produced from Calvin and Luther. These three were original reformers; that is, each for himself, investigated the christian religion in the Sacred Scriptures, without any human system or formulary, to influence his conclusions. What their eyes had seen, their hands handled, and their mouths tasted of the word of life, that declared they to the world; and, it is the single source from whence they drew their information, which has produced their singular conformity in christian doctrine. After them, and after the introduction of a great variety of human creeds, confessions, and formularies, into the church, there arose a second race of Doctors, who, though they did not neglect the Scriptures, modelled their religious systems upon the adopted standards, which human wisdom had put together. These found, (such was the industry and success of their predecessors) but little left for them to do, in the ascertainment of evangelical truth. But, the zeal for reformation, once kindled, is not quickly cooled. They were eager to carry forward the reformation; they resumed many curious, and many insolvable problems, which their predecessors had cautiously avoided, or absolutely refused to touch. Questions multiplied every day; and every new heretical dream, was thought worthy of a formal refutation; hence sprung those enormous tomes of theology, which stagger the human imagination, and bid equal defiance to courage and to industry. I cannot find, that, after all, these systematic theologians have added any thing, really valuable, to what may be found in Calvin's Institutes. It is not to be regretted, that this race of men have become extinct.

They have been succeeded by a various generation of philologers, translators, and commentators, of Holy Scripture. And, when these also shall have served their generation, it is to be hoped, that the church will be furnished with preachers, whose principal method of teaching the doctrine of Christ, will be, the publickly reading and expounding the most faithful translations of the Bible. For this was Zuinglius's method of preaching the gospel; this was Luther's method, this was Calvin's method; and, this is the method pursued in those churches, where the gospel has flourished all along in the greatest purity.

Before I close this chapter, I beg of christians of the Calvinistic persuasion, to indulge me in a few observations, addressed particularly to themselves. To that class of them who believe, that eternal life is to be freely offered to all mankind; and, that Jesus Christ is equally able and willing to save them all; that faith is the duty, and unbelief the sin of each hearer of the gospel; the former, the cause of justification and life; the latter, the cause of condemnation and death—to these I have but little to say. They will approve the zeal and industry, which have been displayed in defence of truths, in our view, all important to the glory of Christ, and to the salvation and comfort of mankind. It will, indeed, be a matter of high gratification, if the demonstration of these truths, shall he found to have diluted and dissipated some of those metaphysical subtleties, which, it is to be feared, yet adhere to these truths, in most parts of the churches. This, at least, was the end aimed at; but, if it has not been effected, still hold fast the precious truths themselves. in spite of the difficulties.

To those Calvinists who think, that the atonement of Jesus is exactly adequate to countervail the sins of the elect, but quite incompetent to the salvation of any one else; I would wish to address a few words, in that humility which becomes me, and with that respect and affection to which they are entitled. With regard to the accuracy of the theoretical structure of their system, I say nothing at present: though I am, on a proper occasion, willing to take a part in the investigation of that abstract and troublesome subject; and shall do this before the termination of the present work. At present I have only two plain questions to ask. Have I not proved by ample scriptural evidence, that in whatever may consist the particular error of your system, erroneous it must be, for it contradicts the Scriptures.

Why do you call your system—or rather will you hereafter continue to call your system, Calvinistic, after it has been so fully proved to be contrary to the most unequivocally avowed doctrine of Calvin? Standing at the foot of that immense monument of genius, learning, eloquence, and all the virtues which can adorn a man, and all the graces which can transform him into a saint; a monument of persecutions unceasing, of toils unabated, of integrity untainted—standing at the foot of that monument which Calvin erected to the glory of his Lord, and which now ought to shelter from every reproach and misrepresentation, his own sainted shade and memory, is it right and fair in you to involve the diffused fame of our ancestor, in the fate of a speculation, of which, it would seem, that he knew nothing, and which is diametrically opposed to the doctrine which he taught. What do you imagine that man would say, were he

now raised from his tomb, to listen to your theory, and pronounce upon its Calvinism. Alas! He would say, is this what the moderns call my doctrine; that there are sinners whom the blood of the Son of God is inadequate to wash clean, that there is guilt which the righteousness of Christ is unworthy to pardon! Was it the inadequacy of the blood of Christ to purge the sins of the world, that ever I taught by word or pen! Is it so that I spent my life, exhausted with perpetual study; worn down with the care of all the churches; slandered, poor, and self-denied; and that I dug for myself a premature grave by toils and exertions beyond human endurance; only to diffuse among mankind the degrading idea of my Lord's mediatorial grace and power, that there are sinners whom he is not able to save! Is this to be the honour attached to my name, is this to be the amount of my usefulness in the church of God, that I brought her doctrine into such a state, that not one of his ministers can assure a sinner that the Son of God is able or willing to save him! If I have done this, better I had never been born. But I am guiltless of the charge. I ever taught the ability of my Lord, the value of his blood, the merit of his righteousness, to save the world, the whole human race; and that nothing was wanting to secure this glorious issue, but their faith in that blessed Saviour. Could I have suspected, that any of those who should pretend that they had received the christian faith from me; would so far mistake the nature, use, and ends of the doctrine of election, as to make it the measure of the merit of Christ's sacrifice; and tell the world that it is in its own nature unworthy of procuring the salvation of any other! But O! were my mas-

ter to remand me to my ancient situation on my cragg on the Alps, and renew the commission and unction with which he once honoured me, I would make Europe and all christendom resound with the thunders of my refutation.

But I have dared too high—let me descend to my proper level. Although I am sure that the refuted theory, has been wrongfully imputed to Calvin, I would be far from accusing those who have so imputed it, of general ignorance, and still farther from suspecting them of dishonesty. I apprehend that they were innocently led into this mistake, by drawing their materials from modern writers of the Calvinistic school, and not from the writings of the patriarch himself. Till very lately, a copy of the INSTITUTES was a rare sight in the United States; and a copy of his whole works, a still rarer. It was in fact impossible for most ministers to resort to the fountain head of true Calvinism, by an immediate consultation of Calvin's works. This inconvenience has been in part remedied. Some controversies in England between the Calvinists and Arminians, convinced a learned man of the former class, that it would be an acceptable service to the church, to present her with a good English version of the Institutes; in order that Calvin's enemies, and his less instructed friends, might learn what Calvinism really is; and that those who were familiar with his writings, might not be so perpetually called upon to defend him from the imputations of doctrines and opinions which he never held. This version was published in England; and in 1816, was republished in America.*

* I shall give the whole title here for an obvious reason.—"Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin; translated from the original Latin, and

The quotations from the Institutes which occur in the present work, were made from this translation; which was thought a preferable course, to that of attempting a new translation from the original. The quotations from his Commentaries I was obliged to translate for myself. Those who have access to the originals, may compare them with the translations in both instances. And now since all have an opportunity of ascertaining what real Calvinism is, by a direct reference to the Institutes; I submit to the candid and just decision of the public, whether I have fairly stated Calvin's doctrine.

And I must be allowed to say, that in my humble opinion, the Arminian party are now called upon, by the love of truth and christian conciliation, as well as by that sense of social honour, which ranks among the christian virtues, to produce a good English translation of the works of Arminius. The comparison of the works of these two illustrious men, will satisfy the world, that many modern Arminians are as far from the doctrine of James Arminius of Leyden; as some modern Calvinists, are remote from the doctrine of John Calvin of Geneva. Much will be gained when the controversy is restored to its original ground, and confined to its first boundaries—much for the removing of mistakes on both sides; much for the abatement of strife and suspicion; much for the profitable investigation of those points, on which there is yet a difference of judgment.

And now will christians of the Arminian persuasion, permit me in the spirit of manly frankness and chris-

collated with the author's last edition in French, by John Allen—in three volumes. Philadelphia, published by Philip H. Nicklin; and by Hezekiah How, New-Haven. 1816."

tian feeling, to address a few words to them. It certainly must have given you no slight satisfaction, to see a Calvinist demonstrating from the Scriptures, that the redemption by the blood of the Son of God, is in its own nature universal; that his atonement is adequate to the salvation of the whole human race; that it is to be offered to every man, as an assured ground of his hope of salvation; and that faith on the part of sinners, is the only thing wanting to render the salvation as universal as the atonement. These I believe are your principles, and the utmost extent to which you carry them: for on all sides, we believe that that the rejection of the atonement by unbelief, issues in death and destruction. It must also have heightened your satisfaction; though in many of you it may have excited surprise; to find overflowing proof produced, that the same were the avowed and strongly inculcated doctrines of the illustrious Calvin. To generous minds nothing can afford a more pure satisfaction, than to see an aspersion wiped from a great character: it multiplies the objects of their admiration, and extends the sphere of their virtuous sympathies; and tends to reconcile them to the world, as richer in the attributes of truth and moral excellence than they had suspected. To differ from the wise and the learned, to rebuke the good, and to find one's self involved in controversy with opponents of such worth and excellence, that every wound he inflicts, becomes a wound equally painful to himself, is what no wise or good man would wish. Is it not a cheering and elevating thought, that on the subject of the atonement Calvin and Arminius, Calvinists and Arminians are the same; and all merge in the common and glorious name of christians. They have indeed fought some battles, of which we may say in the melancholy tone of Lucan,

"Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos."

Such wars indeed seldom or never merit a triumph. Since therefore I have, I hope to your satisfaction, vindicated Calvin, from the charge of limiting the atonement of Jesus Christ by any thing else than the law of God, to which it was made, the human race for whom it was made, and the justice of God by whom it was accepted, may I not appeal to your magnanimity and justice, never to impute the doctrine of a more limited atonement to that man. The accusation is not well founded, it absolutely is not true—and now that all this is known, and may easily be known, to all who will take the trouble of examining into the fact, the accusation will be dismissed; and this ground of controvery cease between the parties.

I grant you may allege, that some Calvinists plead for a narrower atonement, limited in its worth to the number of the elect; and proclaim this opinion to the world, as true Calvinism and gospel; and are not backward in accusing those, who do not hold with them in this opinion, as in so far corrupters of evangelical truth. But an opportunity will hereafter occur for showing, that this sentiment is very modern, that it never universally prevailed in any calvinistic sect, that it is confined to an inconsiderable number in a few sects in Britain and America, that it is contrary to the general judgment of all calvinistic sects, in every part of the world, and that it is at this moment, receiving frequent, and triumphant refutations, in both hemispheres, and that from calvinistic pens. It will not, herefore, you must grant, be fair to charge this error even upon the

present calvinistic sects. But still if this error were adopted by all those sects, and maintained by every man in them; it must not be imputed to Calvin. If you must have war, let it be honest honourable war, on moral warlike principles: charge home with all your forces upon the guilty living; but spare the guiltless dead. You see, that I am not indifferent to your success in this cause. I have even furnished you with some weapons for your self-defence; the quotations which I have made from Calvin, will enable you to look your opponents in the face, and thus to address them. Gentlemen, your theory that Jesus Christ is only the Mediator between God and an elect number, a part of the human race; and that his blood is capable of saving this part and no more, may be true, or it may be false; it may be an opinion, good, bad, or indifferent; but certainly it is not a calvinistic opinion; in maintaining that the blood of Christ is capable of saving the whole human race, we are better Calvinists than you!

Indulge me in one word more, which if it he heard in the same spirit, with which it is uttered, I shall neither be thought impertinent nor obtrusive. There are some principles in the system of Calvin, which have been rejected by Arminius and his followers; chiefly, if not entirely, from an apprehended discrepancy between them, and the universal merit of Christ's atonement, and the universal call of the gospel. The opinions alluded to are the following.

1. That an efficacious work of the spirit of God on the heart of man, is absolutely necessary to enable our blinded, vitiated nature, to perceive the damnable and abominable nature of sin, and to be-

hold and embrace the son of God, freely offered to us for salvation.

2. That this efficacious work of the spirit, by which true faith is produced, issuing in love, loyalty, and all true piety and virtue, is granted to some men by the free grace of God, but not to all men—while still the sinner is justly condemned for his own sins.

3. That God by his eternal purpose and foreknowledge, foreknew and determined all those persons upon whom in time he bestows this efficacious work of his spirit.

4. That all who are thus brought to Christ by the efficacious work of the spirit shall obtain eternal life.

These are the opinions, as I conceive, at present at issue between the sects. Arminius did not deny the fourth, and last of these propositions; he only expressed some hesitation and doubt, probably when hard pressed in argument. Many of the modern Arminians do not imitate the modesty of the founder of their sect. If you will allow me to suppose that you are wrong in this point, I will add, that I think this the ground upon which you will first recover your feet.

The other articles got entangled with that tremendous question, the metaphysical question about *free will and free grace.* A question of which men have as yet made nothing. While on both sides daring speculations have been risked. I am not at all going to reason these subjects with Arminians. The subject fell casually in my way. My main doctrine led me to show that both Calvinists and Arminians agree in the universal worth of the atone-

ment; and that therefore this subject of controversy ought to be removed.

The other subjects do remain as grounds of difference between them; and, I am afraid they will long continue to differ. The subjects of *free will, and free grace*—of the relation between *divine and human agency*, in the operations of man, have divided the philosophers and divines, of all ages, into two parties; some assigning the preponderance to the will of God, others to the will of man: Calvin adopted the former system, Arminius the latter. As to metaphysical debates on this matter, I hold them altogether vain and dangerous. The extremes to which they have been carried, on both sides, are tremendous. The doctrine of divine decrees, and divine agency, has been pushed so far, that man has been made a machine, and God an intelligent fate, without moral perfection; and, on the other hand, the freedom of the human will has been pushed so far, that man has been made a being absolutely independent of his maker, beyond his influence, and above his controul. But, why introduce, at all, a subject of such doubtful or hopeless issue? For the purpose of expressing an opinion, since I dare not presume to offer advice; that since metaphysical disquisitions have hitherto effected nothing but mischief on this matter, it might be well to suspend them for half a century, and give ourselves to searching the Holy Scriptures; each believing for himself, whatever himself can see there. Thus concludes this long chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOPHISTRIES AGAINST THE DUTY OF MANKIND TO BELIEVE IN JESUS, ARISING FROM CRUDE THEORIES OF HUMAN ABILITY AND INABILITY.—SCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF HUMAN AGENCY.

The doctrine of human agency, has, in all ages and nations, been a subject of philosophical discussion; and, when I consider, that after all the investigation, to which it has been submitted, the theories to which it has given origin, and the treatises of which it is the burden, no light at all has been cast upon it; I cannot but conclude, that it is either a very simple, or an extremely profound subject. One circumstance inclines me to decide in favour of its simplicity; which is this, that I never knew an illiterate peasant, or mechanic, express any difficulty, or talk any nonsense respecting it; while I cannot, with truth, assert the same, in regard to learned men, and philosophers. It seems to be a sound rule of philosophising, to conconclude, that a subject which is equally well known to all men, and upon which no talents, nor learning, have ever cast a ray of additional light, must be an ultimate fact, and, therefore, incapable of analysis or explanation; at least, in this light we must view it,

until the happy genius appears, who is capable of making the analysis.

I am not going to enter upon any philosophical inquiry into the nature of human agency, a topic of which I am free to confess, that I know nothing beyond what is known to every man, by the simple exercise of his own consciousness; the amount of which may be comprised in this short proposition, that our actions are the result of our volitions, and our volitions the result of our views and feelings. My reason for introducing this topic into the present work, is, that from certain speculations upon human agency, arguments have been drawn against the general offer of life, to all mankind, in the gospel, and against the duty of all to obey God, by accepting that life. It is merely for the sake of destroying those wicked sophistries, that I introduce the subject. And, indeed, I suspect, that I should never have thought of touching this discussion, had it not been, that after the publication of my former work, in which the doctrines of the universal merit of Christ's righteousness, the universal offer of salvation in the gospel, and the universal right and duty of all men to accept that salvation, were urged with whatever of argument and zeal I could command; I was requested, by a much valued christian friend, to advert, in my next publication, to the argument which some have drawn, from the inability of men to believe in Jesus for salvation, against the right of the minister to command, and the right and duty of the hearer to exercise saving faith. The temper in which the request was urged, satisfied me that it did not originate in any pruriency for speculation; but, that possibly this stumbling block may have lain in the way of that person, when he

was turning his footsteps towards the path of life; and that, probably, he wished that the way might, if possible, be rendered more smooth, to those who might come after him. Certain occurrences have taken place, since that time, which press upon me the duty of redeeming, as far as I can, the pledge then given. If any one should look upon me as a man, *multa et præclara minantem*, and expect some new solution of the difficulty respecting the absolute command of God, and the inability of the sinner to obey it; I forewarn him to prepare himself for a disappointment. I contract no such obligation; I promise no such thing. But, I do promise, (and I shall not fail,) to demonstrate, that the argument, drawn from the sinner's inability to believe, in order to exempt him from the duty of believing, is a sophism, which would abolish all moral law, and render sin and duty equally impossible; and thus, make man nothing more than one of the beasts which perish; while, at the same time, it would exhibit our Creator and Redeemer as destitute of all moral perfections. The question for examination is this:

"How can sinners be commanded to believe in Jesus for salvation—while it is admitted that no sinner can believe in him, without the aid of supernatural grace?"

My first remark on this question is, that it is obviously a philosophical problem. It belongs to the family of the HOWS and the WHYS. It has no relation of affinity, or consanguinity, to the royal family of FACTS. If you inquire into the matter of fact, does God call upon all sinners who hear the gospel to believe in his Son for salvation? The answer is, yes. I have demonstrated this fact beyond all possible contra-

diction, in the foregoing part of this treatise; I assert that this fact is testified in every page of the Bible; I aver that no man possibly can read the Bible, in the exercise of common sense, without seeing that this is one of the best attested facts which it records. Now if we know that God actually has done a thing; we are sure that that thing, whatever it is, is consistent with truth, justice, equity, holiness; with all the moral perfections of the Deity—for God cannot deny himself. Suppose you cannot see how such a fact accords with the perfections of God, would you dare to assert that it is therefore inconsistent with them? What would that child of the twilight, that glow worm of night, that naturally limited, and morally depraved creature, man, be at? Must he make his vision, scarcely extending over the horizon of a gnat, the standard of Jehovah's government? Will he believe nothing except he sees the whole moral reasons of it? Then let him become skeptic and atheist at once.

My second observation is, that this problem is obviously the invention of the devil. It exhibits the creature in the very unbecoming and irreverent attitude of a judge, calling his Creator to an account for his conduct, and demanding that he shall prove it to be conformable to law. That God has called, and commanded, every hearer of the gospel to believe in his son for salvation, is a mere matter of fact, attested by every page of the Bible. But instead of assuming it as a first principle, that whatever God does is right; or in other words, that God always acts in a consistency with his own moral attributes; a hypothetical problem is introduced for decision—namely, would it be just in God, if he were to command all men to believe in his Son for salvation? It is obvious that this question ad-

mits of two answers, each directly contradictory of the other; and as these contradictory answers have been given, by different classes of speculators, we are obliged to notice them.

1. If you decide that it would be unjust in God to command sinners, as such, to believe in his Son for salvation; you fall between the horns of the following fearful dilemma—either that God has not given such a command to sinners; or that he has given them an unjust command. If you assert the first you contradict the Bible from end to end, as has been made evident in the foregoing part of this work: If you assert the second you blaspheme against your Creator, nay against your Redeemer, by charging him with unrighteousness.

2. But suppose that after long meditation, and reasoning, you should decide that such a commandment is just. What acquisition have you made to compensate your waste of time, and remunerate your toil? You have made the mighty discovery, that Jehovah has acted with justice! How much does this add to the stock of human knowledge? A babe in Christ, nay, every man of common sense, admits it as a first principle that whatever God does, is right; because the essential fountain of all rectitude cannot act unjustly. But what, I pray you, was your situation, what the situation of the sinners who stood around you, all the length of time that this question was under examination? All that time you had no salvation to offer them; and they saw no salvation to accept; meanwhile death was mowing them down, and the grave was closing in upon them for ever. Is this no evidence that the problem was started by the devil!

But do not imagine that the arch-enemy, will content himself with vanquishing a single column, on so favourable a field. He has still fresh conquests in eye; take the two following. One speculator argues thus:

1. For God to command unregenerate men to believe, who cannot believe, were unreasonable and unjust.

2. But God is equitable and just.

3. Therefore he does not command unregenerate men to believe in his Son for salvation.

Consequently, faith is not a duty required of them, nor is unbelief their sin.

Another speculator argues in a different direction, but lands in a conclusion, equally unscriptural. Thus:

1. For God to command men to believe in Jesus for salvation, who cannot believe in him, were unjust.

2. But God has commanded all sinners who hear the gospel to believe in Jesus.

3. Therefore all sinners who hear the gospel, have full power, capacity, and ability to believe.

And consequently all that is said about regeneration, and special grace, is false and absurd.

Thus by a metaphysical discussion of this hopeful question, one class of speculators, teach sinners to despise the duty of believing; and another class teach them to trust in their own powers, and despise the grace of the Holy Ghost. In either case, truth suffers, and souls perish. As to the sophistry couched in the two foregoing arguments, we shall meet it when we come to ascertain the nature of human ability and inability. In the mean time let us remark:

That the devil having sufficiently embroiled the christian church with questions, difficulties, and doubts on this subject; having split her unity into factions, one warring against the duty of faith, and another against the necessity of renewing grace; he does not fail to expose both to the sneer and scorn of the sceptical brotherhood, who being artificers of doubts by profession, are fain to nurse their infidelity on the offal of christian imperfection.

To relieve our eyes a little from the minuteness of logical inspection, let us cast them lightly over the general field. Is it not a notorious fact, that Satan discovers a specific and extreme anxiety, to prevent a full and free offer of the Redeemer's salvation to perishing sinners? If, indeed, he can succeed in representing the Redeemer's person in so contemptible, or detestable a view, that no reasonable man would think of looking to him for salvation; that instead of admiring, they must despise him; instead of loving, must hate him; and instead of glorying in his name, must think it a sort of religious duty to do all manner of despite, and belch out all manner of blasphemies against it; this undoubtedly were the higher triumph, and in this lofty and ambitious design he has had great success. He has exhibited the Son of God to some as Beelzebub; to others as a glutton and a wine-bibber; a blasphemer, a sabbath breaker, and a seditious disturber of church and state; a deceiver, a hypocrite, and a fellow; as one who so far from being capable of saving others, was not able to save himself from a most excrutiating and ignominious, but well merited death.

But when all these sophistries fail, when Jesus has been recognised as "the Christ, the Son of the liv-

ing God," the only Saviour of sinners; then the adversary's cunning displays itself, by throwing stumbling blocks in the sinner's way to prevent him from coming to this Saviour. The doctrine of election we have seen to be one of these stumbling blocks: Jesus, says the adversary, is able to save the elect only, and as you have no evidence that you are elected, you have no sure ground upon which to build your faith. Another of his stumbling blocks is human inability: God, says he, is equitable in all his demands, and will not require of his creatures to perform a service for which he has not furnished them with ability; and as he has taught sinners himself that without his supernatural grace they cannot believe in the Saviour of sinners; it follows that they are not required to exercise saving faith. Is this fancy, or is it fact? Ah! What systems of theology, has this crooked cunning serpent invented; and how deep was his policy, in putting the manufacture of some of the worst of them, into the hands of ingenious and zealous ministers of the gospel; for as the sins of holy men are the most corrupting in society, so are their errors the most seductive. Mankind must concede to such men the weight of authority; so that they can neither go right nor wrong, without carrying many along with them. And since I am on the subject of human ability and inability, let me call the reader's attention to a theological system built on this ground, which displays the wild maniacal wanderings of false philosophy, perhaps, beyond any thing that can be brought into comparison with it. It is this:

A NEW MORAL LAW MADE FOR SINNERS, WHICH CONTAINS NOT ONE SINGLE MORAL PRINCIPLE.

According to the Scriptures, sinners are not capable of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, nor of loving their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; and their neighbours as themselves; nor in fact, of performing any spiritual duty, unless by the aid of supernatural grace. Those who make human ability the measure of the divine requisitions, have deduced from the above facts the following conclusions; that God does not require sinners to believe in his Son; that he does not require them to love himself with all their heart, and their neighbours as themselves; and in general, that he does not require them to perform any spiritual duty whatever. Thus was a system of religion formed, which dispenses with every moral principle, and abolishes the whole law of God.

But as it would not do at all, at least it would not look well, to leave a race like ours without any rule; a law therefore was made, compatible with all the lusts of the human heart, and which does not require the exercise of a single virtue. Man, it seems, should go to church, but he is not obliged to go with the intention of glorifying God; he may sit and hear the gospel preached, but he is under no obligation to believe it; he may hear the goodness of God celebrated, but he is not bound to love him; the redemption which is in Jesus may sound in his ears, but no duty binds him to accept it in his heart; he may listen to praises, in which he is not commanded to join, and to prayers, to which he need not say, Amen!

But enough—I need not exemplify in second table duties.

As to this system, I might ask the following questions: 1. Wherein would the value of obedience to such a law consist? 2. By what moral principle is such a law inforced? 3. What would be the criminality of neglecting it altogether? But the whole theory is too absurd for refutation. We may, however, learn from this, as well as from a thousand other instances, that metaphysical christianity is a world by itself; replenished with hydras, gorgons, and chimeras dire; and all monstrous, all prodigious things.

I have given the above specimens of the monstrous theories, which have resulted from abstract speculations on human ability and inability; in order to put us on our guard against rash speculations, and headlong logical processes, carried on by means of terms which obviously must be equivocal, else they could never have led rational men, and lovers of truth, into such revolting and impious conclusions. I shall now endeavour to reduce these terms to a definite scriptural meaning; but I forewarn my reader not to stand on the tip-toe of expectation for some new discovery; because I have nothing to offer, but what has been a thousand times said already, and, perhaps, more luminously illustrated, than I have the power to do. I would, beyond all things, beg of all those who enter into this speculation, to exercise the most conscientious candour; for in this cause it is candour, not acuteness, that is required. Let me intreat, that no man will play upon himself, or upon his brother, that easiest, meanest, and worst of all sophistries, the change of the definition of terms. Let us explain

what we mean by human ability to keep the divine law, and human inability to keep it; and let the definitions be substituted in the argument in room of the terms. If this be done we shall probably not differ in judgment; and if it be not done, we never can agree.

HUMAN ABILITY.

It is I believe agreed upon all hands, that the fall has not annihilated any faculty, or energy of the human soul. For if it has, unquestionably the law which regulated the operation of that faculty or energy, must cease. Thus when man dies, all the laws of animal life which regulated the contraction of the heart and muscles, the sensibility of the nerves, the perceptive power of the senses, and the locomotive powers of the whole animated machine, cease as to him. Thus also, if God were to annihilate the material universe, all that which we now denominate the laws of nature, would perish with nature herself: there could be no law of gravitation, if there were no bodies to gravitate; nor any law of planetary motion, if there were no planets to move. In fact the very idea of a law, includes the idea of some being subject to that law; and the idea of a law which regulates nothing is an absurdity. Who sees not, that if God were to annihilate the human race, the moral law of that race must cease to operate, because it would have no subject to operate upon; it would not bind NOTHING, it would not punish NOTHING, it would not reward NOTHING. By parity of reasoning, supposing the powers and energies of the human soul to be ten in number, and that the divine law regulates

each one of the ten; then if any one of them be annihilated, that part of the divine law which prescribed the action of that power, must cease, and so on of all the rest. All this is so plain, that there seems to be something of childish simplicity in mentioning it; but we ought to stoop to the simplicity of children, when we are searching after the truth of God.

Now it will not be denied, that the whole law of God, in both its tables, and in all its details, is obligatory on the whole family of man; for this is the self-evident meaning of the Holy Scriptures. And then as every law implies a subject, it follows that every precept of the divine law, implies that man has a faculty to perform the action, which the law requires to be performed. And as no precept of the divine law is abrogated, it follows that no faculty or energy of man is annihilated. All these powers, or energies, belong to the nature of man, and he would not be man without them, and they are all under obligation to operate according to the moral law. This will not be denied. I may add, that as these faculties, energies, or powers, or by whatever name you chuse to call them, are bestowed upon men in a very different degree, each man is required only to exert his particular powers, or faculties, or energies in the service of God. Thus David who could not fight in mail, fought with his sling. Thus the widow who could not contribute by shekels, threw in her mite. Thus no man is, or can be, required to do more than to exert all his faculties and energies to the utmost in obedience to the divine law, according to the providential circumstances and opportunities which God affords him.

I think I have now simply, fairly, and fully stated the ideas of the true and genuine Calvinists upon this subject. In expressing our ideas to one another, we are obliged to make use of words, under all the disadvantages to which human language is subject. When Calvinists say that man has NATURAL ABILITY, or NATURAL POWER to obey the divine law, they mean nothing else, than that there exists in the nature of man, faculties, energies, or powers, whose actions are prescribed by the moral law; and that this law requires nothing more than that those powers, faculties, energies, be exerted according to its prescriptions. It is not fair to change upon them, their own definition of the term POWER, or their definition of the epithet NATURAL. Take them on their own ground, admit their own definitions of these terms; and then prove them to be wrong, whoever can. But I protest that it is pitiful, and unmanly; and, if done knowingly, a dishonest sophistry, to change the meaning of their terms, and then flourish away with verbal refutation.

I am fully aware of the ambiguity of the word POWER, and am not much gratified to find, that some are labouring to render the epithet NATURAL, equally ambiguous. I shall take an opportunity of pointing out these ambiguities before this chapter is ended; and of adverting to some of the precious logomachies, which they have engendered. In the mean time, I hope that Calvinists of the old school, will admit that I have given a fair account of what they mean, by the phrases *natural ability* and *natural power*, as they use them in this argument. I have added nothing to their old immemorial doctrine; and I hope I have omitted nothing essential to its fair and full exhibition.

HUMAN INABILITY.

This is the next subject. And since *ability* and *inability* are directly contradictory terms; it follows, that if we maintain that man possesses ability to obey the divine law; and yet that he labours under an inability to obey it; the ability, and the disability, must be of different kinds. He cannot be able in the same sense, in which he is unable; nor can he be unable in the same sense, in which he is able. If I were sure that this work would never fall into the hands of any but Calvinists, I might dispatch the present topic in a few words. But as it may chance to come under the eye of some, who carry out the idea of human ability in all directions, and maintain that man, without any supernatural grace, may secure his own salvation; either by obeying the original law of works, or by complying with the remedial law of grace, it becomes necessary that I should say something in detail upon the subject of inability. And as this is a doctrine, against which, beyond all others, the human heart rises in arms, I shall state the truth at large from the Scriptures; that men may learn, not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but humbling themselves to their proper level, may look to God for that supernatural grace, which the infirmity of their nature so much needs. The following are the scriptural views of the moral condition of human nature.

Jer. xvii. 9. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give

every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

Matt. xv. 19—20. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man."

Eccles. vii. 20. "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

Rom. iii. 9—20. "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth goed, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The above passages of Scripture are produced merely as a sample of the doctrine taught by all prophets, and all apostles, and the Son of God himself; and the sample, small as it is, is too plain to be mistaken, and too unequivocal to be perverted. It would be well if those, who are disposed to entertain high opin-

ions of the moral purity and capacity of human nature, were to read the Scriptures with candid and unbiased minds; nor would it be unworthy of them to read with similar dispositions, the living volume of human nature, as it is spread open before them in their own hearts, and in society at large. Whatever they may imagine, they must admit this much; that there is not a perfectly virtuous man on earth; that the aberrations, sins, crimes, enormities, which degrade our nature and demoralize society, and prove a burden to the earth, have their fountain and origin in the depraved dispositions of the human heart; that the whole human family, without an exception, are sinners, and liable to the wrath of God; and finally that no human being ever did obtain, or ever will obtain, eternal life as the reward of his unassisted efforts towards the acquisition of personal virtues; for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified before God. Admitting all this, and none but an infidel can deny any part of it, pray what end do they propose to themselves, who waste their ingenuity in panegyrics upon the virtuous capacities of man. Let them abandon the vain and profitless theme, which can possibly produce nothing but self deception, and the deplorable consequences of self deception on this subject.

One circumstance ought to decide the question of human righteousness for ever; which is this, that God has sent his own Son into this world in the character of a Saviour of sinners; and this Saviour has informed us that he came not to call righteous persons, but sinners to repentance; and he calls all men every where to repent, because all are sinners. Whatever men may fondly imagine, respecting the purity of their hearts or the uprightness of their life; they ought to

reflect that it is only by a Saviour that they can ascend to heavenly glory; they ought to know that "he who believeth on the Son of God hath life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."*

Having thus taken a view of the inability of man to obtain eternal life, by fulfilling the condition of the original law of works, let us next inquire, whether he possesses the power of securing to himself an interest in the remedial law of grace, by believing in the redeeming Son of God. If this question also be decided against him, the fiction of human ability must vanish for ever; for it will follow, that man possesses neither the power of procuring salvation for himself, nor yet the power of accepting it as a gift, when it is freely offered to him. And here again, as every where else, when tossed by the storms of religious controversy, the Scriptures themselves are our best bower anchor.

John vi. 43—44. "Jesus, therefore, answered, and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John iii. 1—10. "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be

* John iii. 36

born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

John i. 6—13. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Rom. viii. 1—2. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And so on to the 18th verse.

Gal. v. 16—25. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen."

I have produced these few passages of Scripture, and my readers, who are familiar with the Scriptures, know that they are few, in comparison with what might have been brought forward—and I have taken the first that presented themselves to my memory, because the hosts of texts under this class are so numerous, that it would require months, and even years, to transcribe, number, name, and analyse them. But, I have produced them for the single purpose of establishing this single fact, that even for the ability of accepting that salvation, which is freely offered to sinners by the Son of God, the believer is indebted to the divine spirit, operating upon his soul. If I may

credit the Scriptures, man can no more accept the salvation offered by Jesus Christ, than he can work out a salvation for himself. Leave man without a Saviour, and he perishes; give him a Saviour, and offer him a free salvation, without the renewing Spirit of God, enabling him to accept that salvation from that Saviour, he perishes still. If this is not Scriptural truth, I can only exclaim with Luther, and in similar agony, "GOTT HELFE MIR, ICH CAN NICHT MEHR."

But from the whole what can I conclude, but that our poor lost race, whom I pity while I blame, labour under a woful inability to earn eternal life for themselves, or even to accept it when freely offered them by the Son of God, their brother in human flesh. This is what Calvinists, and what I suppose all true christians mean by HUMAN INABILITY. And thus we are thrown back to our argument. But I do not intend to dilate much upon it.

I have said already, that by HUMAN ABILITY we mean, that man possesses all the faculties, energies, and powers, which the law of God undertakes to regulate; and these powers, faculties, or energies are essential to the nature of man, therefore, we say man has natural powers to obey the law of God; or summing upon the whole into one point, we say he has NATURAL POWER to obey the law of God.

But again, we see, and know, and feel, that there is some strange, and unaccountable derangement in these natural powers and faculties; that they never, of themselves, produce their legitimate results. This derangement we call, the corruption of human nature; and as often, we call it depravity. Now since this corruption, or depravity, or whatever you please

to call it, always prevents us from doing our duty, and constrains us to do what is not our duty, but directly the reverse, we say that man in his present state, is UNABLE to do his duty. But we do not call this inability, by the name of natural inability; because we are sure that it is not essential to the nature of man. We are certain that Adam in innocence possessed all that was essential to the nature of man; yet he had nothing of this corruption or depravity; and we know that the saints will be delivered from this depravity, yet they shall continue to enjoy all the powers of human nature. We believe that God created all the natural powers of man—but we do not believe, that he created this corruption, depravity, or inability to do our duty. We refuse to apply the epithet, natural, to this inability, in the same sense in which we applied it to the ability of man.

By what terms then, in our verbal communications, shall we distinguish the two. Let me express what I conceive to be the fact. In the philosophical disquisitions of men, the words natural, and moral, are frequently used in contradistinction; the different classes of things about which we talk, and about which we write, require that we should employ distinctive terms and epithets. Thus we talk, of natural agents, and moral agents; of natural law, and moral law; and from this contrasted use of the epithets, natural and moral, I conceive to have arisen in theology the phrases, that man has a natural power to obey the law of God, but not a moral power. So far as my comprehension extends, I frankly confess, that I do not see that the term moral, in this application, has any positive idea attached to it. But it has the effect of stating a contrast: when I say, that man has

natural power to obey the law of God; I mean that in his nature are found all the faculties, and active energies, whose operations the law prescribes.—But when I say man is unable to obey the law of God, I mean that there is some derangement of his powers, which forbids their producing their legitimate results. That such power exists in the human mind, we know; that such *remora* prevents that power from producing its effects, we know. And the facts being ascertained, why quarrel about words and syllables! And, now dropping these delicately minute speculations, let us turn to something more tangible.

Many are loud in their praises of the dignity of human nature; and if definite ideas be affixed to the term, no objection can be urged against its use. If the dignity of human nature means, the exalted nature of those intellectual and moral faculties with which God has endowed man both for speculation and action; if it means his natural adaptation to range that unbounded sphere, which is thrown open to his thoughts and operations; if it means his insatiable thirst after boundless and endless enjoyments, and those of the purest and most exalted kind; if it includes his unlimited capacity of improvement, by which he may ascend higher and higher through the progress of endless duration, in his approaches toward the source of all perfection and glory; then surely no human eloquence can pronounce an overstrained panegyric upon the dignity of man. And I will assert, that the sacred writers have said as much as ever will or can be said on this subject.

They never represent man as less than the living earthly image of Jehovah, his Creator; an image indeed less or more injured and marred in all its powers and

attributes, but chiefly marred and injured in those which are highest. Nay, what is it, that these same sacred orators represent as constituting, and through all the stages of its enormity aggravating, the exceeding sinfulness of human sin; what but the prostration of this inherent essential dignity of our nature. To behold this intellect of ours, created on purpose to contemplate its God, and by that contemplation to grow more and more into his likeness; intended to ascend, as by a sacred ladder, from nature up to nature's God, stupidly mistaking the ladder for its maker; and worshipping and glorifying the creature instead of the Creator: To behold moral man, formed to be the tender parent, and upright magistrate of this world; the instrument of God Almighty's bounty to creation, and the instrument and organ of creation's praises to Almighty God; turned into a heartless tyrant, inundating his dominions with blood and tears; to behold a creature, whose capacity of enjoyment, not this whole world, nor the whole created universe, nor any thing save the infinite God himself, can satisfy, seeking happiness in the husks which were created to be food for swine; and then turning its eyes towards heaven, and cursing God for not having made it a swine to be satisfied with such enjoyments.—Is it not the sight of these notorious facts, which wrings from the sacred writers their tearful lamentations over the forlorn condition of man; their unequivocal unqualified condemnation of his whole conduct; their unmitigated denunciations of the wrath of God, against his rebellions and abominations. Ah! what dignity! what prostration of dignity! do these inspired writers behold in man!

But, if there be any speculators, (such there have been,) who, with overweening vanity, slightly covered by the thin transparent veil, of an affectionate interest in the honour of their race, panegyrize the dignity of man's moral character, in the eyes of God, in order, no doubt, that they themselves may share in the praise; let them know that they have this speculation and theory entirely to themselves; and may run riot in every direction over the field, without the danger of coming into company with any sacred writer whatever. But, if they will not submit to the authority of the servants of God, at least, let them venerate his Son. When the personal Word of God, the faithful and true Witness, the Light of the world, gives in his testimony, the evidence ought, in reason, to be closed. He has, unquestionably, given appalling details of human corruption, and of human guilt; he never fails to trace the sins of man to their origin, a corrupted heart; he never describes the human heart, but as the overflowing fountain of all enormity; when describing the natural productions of the human heart, he mentions murders, adulteries, blasphemies, thefts, false witnesses; and declares, that these are the things which defile a man. Are we to infer, from all this, that the source, origin, and cause, of all these defilements, the human heart, is itself pure!

Will any man say, that this is but one side of the question? Well, be it so; what is the other side? Cross-examine the witness, and elicit and extort the whole truth. He was certainly cross-examined severely, by the age in which he lived; but, if any interrogatory was omitted, let this generation supply the deficiency of their fathers. Where has Jesus Christ spoken one good word of the heart of man? What

are the virtuous dispositions, the pious propensities, the holy achievements, which he has ascribed to it? I protest I have never heard of them. And then, again, I most solemnly protest, that I cannot account for his silence, respecting those holy dispositions, and virtuous actions—provided they have any existence at all. I argue from what he has said, I argue from what he has not said. I argue from his testimony, I argue from his silence. Too wise to be mistaken, too honest to deceive; too candid, and honourable, to aggravate; too much a friend to man, not to do him all possible justice—I conclude that his censure is no slander; and, that if he withholds praise, it must be because it is not due. I know very well, that there have been men, and men of mind too, (and what has been may still be,) who have represented human nature in its present state, as neither good nor bad; but, as a bit of white paper, upon which you may write good or bad, as you please; nor am I unacquainted with the whimsical and unphilosophical reasons, which they have assigned for the fact, that all men turn out to be sinners in the long run. This is an odd result to be sure. And, in my poor judgment, even the blind goddess, Chance, herself, could hardly blunder so systematically. But to go on. There are other speculators who decide, that every man, in his natural state, is both good and bad; that his heart contains all possible vicious, and all possible virtuous propensities; is both hard and soft; cold and hot; *rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno.* But two things weigh heavily with me: first, that the inspired writers, with the Son of God at their head, ascribe human sins to the human heart, and human righteousness to the sanctifying spirit of God: second, that all men who

are most notoriously defective in piety and virtue, are the greatest advocates for the virtuous propensities, and powers of our nature; while all these who give the best testimony of their principled piety and virtue, give the glory of the whole to the gracious Spirit. Is not this strange!

One more topic remains. It seems to some theorists, that THE FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN WILL, is the fact, which is to harmonize all our views respecting the moral condition and responsibility of man. And who knows not what has been written, and what has been said, *de libero arbitrio*, and *de servo arbitrio;* and when I consider the intellectual rank, and the literary rank, of the men who have taken opposite sides on this question, I cannot resist the conclusion, that they mistook and misunderstood each other's meaning, and got involved in the fruitless noisy strife of words. Some seem to argue, that if the will be free, man has within himself the power to control, and bear down, and annihilate all his vitious propensities; while others finding that these propensities triumph over the will, seem to deny the freedom of the will altogether. I am certainly not going to venture into the metaphysics of this question. Let those define FREEWILL, who have defined space, duration, and motion!

I am sorry to find, that this subject of freewill continues to be a bone of contention between, what I call the two families of the christian church; the Calvinists and the Arminians. As a Calvinist of the old school, I assert that those Arminians accuse us unjustly, who impute to us a denial of the freedom of the human will; and I am well aware, that they may retort upon us, that some who call themselves

Calvinists unjustly charge Arminians with denying the free grace of God. I know there are unjust, but, I hope and believe, unwitting and unintentional misrepresentations on both sides. However as I have no man's proxy, and as no man shall have mine, I speak only for myself.

It seems to me, then, that the phrase FREEWILL, is a sort of a pleonasm, or superabundance of verbal utterance, such pleonasms are common in human speech. All freedom, appears to me, to lie only in the will; and to say I WILL do a certain thing, seems to imply that I am FREE. The human will, or in other words, the freedom of human action, is incapable of definition. It stands a simple fact; a thing *sui generis*—a thing by itself—All we know of the WILL, or of the FREEDOM of the will, we know by simple consciousness. The fact admits of no account, or explanation. And, so far as I know, among the true philosophers, in the science of the human mind, no account of the fact has for a long time been attempted. There are, no doubt, curious, coincidences, and co-operations of what are called the powers of the human mind; or there are delicate analogies between the actions of the one and indivisible soul of man; but leaving these subjects to the men to whom God has assigned the sore travail of seeking and of searching out, concerning all the works, which he hath done under the sun, I proceed to the consideration of matters open to every capacity.

I therefore assert, that no strength of MORAL or of IMMORAL propensity, affects in the slightest degree the freedom of the will. This is a matter of fact question: and, as a fact question, I shall treat it.

1. God is necessarily a most holy being, is he therefore not a free agent! He cannot lie, he cannot do any thing immoral; is he not, then, a free agent! If God be not a free agent, there neither is, nor possibly can be, any freedom in the nature of things—If he is a free agent, then the most necessary operation of moral attributes, is no ways opposed, to freewill, nor to free-agency.

2. Is "the archangel ruined," that Satan; that liar, and farther of lies; whose immoral propensities controul and determine, all his volitions, and all his actions—is not he a free agent? If not, wherefore is he accused, and punished for guilt? That there is not one spark of virtue, or of virtuous propensity, in him, is, I believe acknowledged. Yet he is a free agent, and held responsible for the whole of his conduct.

3. And coming at last, to our own poor race, suppose that we are become immoral, and inclined only to evil, would that destroy our free agency and responsibility? It seems not.

4. When the saints are placed in heavenly blessedness, beyond the reach of temptation, and confirmed in righteousness, beyond the possibility of error or transgression, they will still continue free agents, serving God of choice and preference.

I consider that these undoubted facts establish the doctrine; that no degree of moral propensity or inclination to righteous conduct, however strong, irresistible, and even infinite, so as to render immoral conduct absolutely impossible, destroys or in the slightest degree impairs the freedom of moral agency. And, on the other hand, no degree of immoral propensity or inclination; not even the reprobate obdu-

racy of those whom God has finally abandoned; nor the incurable malignity of satanic malice, in any manner affects the free will, or free agency, or moral accountableness of the creature. Thus free agency stands distinct from the moral or immoral inclinations of the agent. This is a doctrine established by well known facts; or rather it is the verbal declaration of matters of fact; it cannot therefore be false. It follows of consequence, that man's free agency and accountableness, are not destroyed, nor in any respect, altered, changed, or modified by his fall. He is at present as free as ever he was, or as ever he possibly can become. It is, therefore, as just in God to demand of him, that all his powers and faculties of soul and body, be regulated in all their actions by the moral law; as it was just to lay a similar injunction upon him in the state of innocence. Consequently the command given to all, who hear the gospel, to believe in the Son of God for salvation, stands upon the same just and equitable ground, with all the other moral precepts of the divine law.

Some indeed, will say, it is all one and the same thing, whether man be destitute of faculties to obey the divine law, or have those faculties so impeded and perverted by corruption, that obedience to the law cannot be rendered. But I assert, it is not all the same thing; for God does not esteem it the same thing, as the Scriptures clearly show; and man does not esteem it the same, as the universal consent of the human family shows. When was it ever admitted as a legal justification, or apology for theft, murder, or slander; that the parties accused were possessed of a most covetous, murderous, and malignant temper and disposition? Never! The more immoral the dis-

positions of the heart are, the more do we detest the character, the more loudly does justice thunder her punishments upon the guilty head. I speak the language of human nature, I record the moral sentiments of every human heart; and this must be true philosophy, if there be any such thing as philosophy. The strength of corruption is no apology for sin; else the worst of men must be pronounced superior to the best; and Satan himself would be entirely innocent. There is, however, one beautiful view of human nature which I cannot pass by without directing towards it my own, and my reader's attention; for there still are some springs, and green oases, some spots of verdure, and of shade, to cheer us occasionally in this dreary wilderness and journey of life. Whenever we see a notorious transgressor turn from the evil of his ways, and engage with all his soul in the service of God; no past transgressions, no habits of sin, no strength of evil inclination yet remaining, can chill the warm pulsations of moral approbation in our hearts. We see the company of the two armies in the Shulamite, we see the war of the flesh against the spirit, and of the spirit against the flesh; we behold Michael and his angels drawn up against Satan and his angels; and our hearts instantly attach themselves to the side which is right. It is then that we sympathise with the man; it is then that our detestation of his corruptions, is absorbed in pity for his difficulties; when we reflect on the strength of vicious habits which he has to subdue, and the strong propensities which he has to mortify, we find that we condemn and hate them most unequivocally. But then we see, and we feel, and we declare, that these are not the man, but the enemies of the man, which he

hates more intensely than we do, and which he is determined to extirpate. We sympathise in his difficulties; we cheer him in his conflicts; we forget his faults the moment we see him again on his feet; and in all cases pray for him, and inspire him with fortitude to endure, and courage to persevere. Thus character is redeemed, and the worst of men become the best.

Something has escaped my recollection, I know not what; but I hope my reader will think, that I have said enough to prove that no fair argument can be drawn from the corruption of human nature, against the duty of the gospel minister to offer salvation through Jesus to all sinners, and command them to accept it; nor against the duty of all sinners most promptly and gratefully to accept the salvation so offered. If I am correct in this supposition, I shall have succeeded in my attempt to rescue the gospel call from this particular dictate of false philosophy.

Before dismissing the subject of human power, of man's ability, and man's inability, to believe in Christ, and obey the law; I beg leave to call the attention of gentlemen, who have paid attention to the nature of language, as an instrument and vehicle of human thought, to the great ambiguity of these terms, as they are used in the discussions of didactic and polemic theologians. It is in fact to that ambiguity chiefly, if not entirely, that I am inclined to ascribe the litigations on the present subject among honest christian men. And I think it more charitable, and more respectful too, to suppose that they have tripped upon an ambiguous expression, rather than that they have been incapable of judging of the truth, or neglectful of the authority of divine revelation. Power and

ability, as used in this argument, I take to be exact synonymes, and believe that they are used indiscriminately, and may in every instance, be exchanged the one for the other, without affecting the argument. Inability is the term of contrast, and is directly contradictory of power and ability. Let us attend to the different applications of these terms, and we shall discover the source, and origin, of much theological controversy, wrath, and schism.

I. Application of the Terms.

Man by nature has power (natural power) to believe, and to obey the whole law of God.—That is, he has the natural faculties whose operation the law prescribes.

Man by the fall has lost the ability or power (moral power) of obeying the law of God.—That is, the evil disease of depravity or corruption, prevents the proper exertion of his natural powers.

This is the doctrine, and I believe the language, of all that extensive portion of the christian church, who go by the name of Calvinists; at least it is the doctrine and the language of all those Calvinists from whom I derived the knowledge of the gospel, and with whose writings I am familiar. My own opinion is, that it is the doctrine of the Scriptures, and that it exactly accords with the state of human things. It is plain, however, that these applications of the terms, power and ability are delicate and dangerous; the terms are used in different senses; there is a sense in which man has power, and there is a sense in which he has not power, to obey the law of God. This is an ugly jar in the application of the same term; man

has power, and man has not power to obey the law of God. It would be a direct contradiction in terms, were the same idea attached to the word power in both instances. The difficulty was felt by Calvinists; and language did not furnish them with different terms, to express those different sorts of power, or of the want of power, they were necessitated to have recourse to distinctive epithets, and chose the epithets natural, and moral, for the purpose: thus they say, man has a natural power to obey the law of God; but he has not a moral power. This is the true origin of the theological phrases natural power, and moral power; and I am satisfied, that under a due exercise of candour and justice, those who use such language, will neither be called fools, nor corrupters of the scriptural doctrine. But, to be sure, if a verbologist chuses to quibble on words, he can do so to the end of the world.

II. Application of the Terms.

Man must have power to believe in Jesus Christ, and obey the divine law, else God would never call upon him to do so.

This is the Arminian phraseology—but when Arminians come to consult the Scriptures, as they conscientiously do, they find that without the aid of the Spirit of God, without some supernatural gracious assistance, man really is unable to believe in Jesus, or to obey any divine commandment. Since then, according to their speculations, they could not assert, that man by nature has the power (what Calvinists call moral power) to obey the law; and since they thought that the possession of such power is absolutely necessary

to furnish the law with the authority to command; it is plain that they were obliged to resort to some origin of power, different from mere nature. And they resorted to the only origin of power, to which they could resort; the moralizing spirit of Jesus, which is shed upon all mankind, in one degree or other; or what I would wish to style the mediatorial, or remedial spirit of the Son of God, shed over all his mediatorial kingdom. Since I cannot avoid this subject, I must touch it; but the extent of my general theme, requires that I should touch it but slightly. The well instructed in this theme will, I have no doubt, excuse the imperfections of a hasty sketch; those to whom the subject is new will have the goodness to listen.

That there is a gracious dispensation of the Spirit of God, to all mankind without exception, by Jesus the mediator between God and man, is capable of the most abundant and decisive scriptural proof. That this moralising, or mediatorial spirit of Jesus, is the cause of all the charities, graces, and virtues of domestic and social life; that without this spirit, society could not be kept together for a single day, is capable of the same decisive scriptural proof. That from corrupted human nature, nothing but sin and wretchedness can flow, the Scriptures teach. But man is not a devil! Why is he not? He has sinned like the devil, and like the devil is a rebel against God. Yet he is not all malice and voluntary malignity, against God and every thing that God has created. But why is he not? Because God has not abandoned him. God has placed him under the mediation of his own Son, and that Son has bestowed upon the whole race a ministration of his gracious spirit, which preserves alive, as it produces, all those human virtues which support, adorn and bless

human society. It is this general ministration of the Spirit of God, which Arminians call universal grace. I must say, however, that this is not a doctrine peculiar to the Arminians; it is as strenuously maintained by the Calvinists, as by them. And I do not know that any man since the apostles' days, has exhibited this doctrine so fully as John Calvin.

Now the Arminians, knowing that man has not power (moral power) by nature to do any thing good; and believing that the possession of that power is essential to moral responsibility; have taken man as blessed with the general *moralizing, mediatorial* spirit of God; and assert that by means of this spirit he is able to believe in Jesus Christ, and to obey the whole law perfectly. This is the real scientific origin of two of their peculiar opinions—namely, that all men have power to believe in Jesus for salvation; and that all believers may attain to sinless perfection in this life. It is plain that Arminians amalgamate into one idea, what the Calvinists consider as two. Ask an Arminian, has man by nature the power of believing in Jesus? He says no! Whence then has he it? From the general grace of God, who has shed down the mediatorial spirit of his Son on all mankind.

And here I must advert to a very singular difference of opinion between these two sects; which is *toto celo* different from what they say of each other, and from what the public stamp upon them both as their specific characteristics. I feel that I may speak plainly: for if I at all know my own spirit, I can speak what I think on this subject, without giving any just ground of offence to any creature of either party.

It is an absolute fact (however contrary to common opinion) that we Calvinists absolutely do ascribe

more power to human nature, than the Arminians do, and absolutely carry the idea of human obligation and responsibility, farther than they! For we do assert that man, in virtue of his possession of natural faculties, has natural power to obey the whole law of God, which was enacted solely for the purpose of regulating those faculties. Hence we maintain that the most abandoned reprobate, whom God has cast off for ever, by entirely withdrawing the strivings of his spirit; possesses nevertheless, natural power to obey the whole law of God. Nay that the damned in hell possess that power; that they ought to exercise it; and that they continue sinning to all eternity, because they do not exercise this power.

Now the Arminian, whose idea of power is different from that of the Calvinist, opposes this latter opinion, and asserts that the damned in hell, whether devils or men, cannot possibly commit sin; because, God having totally withdrawn his spirit from them, they do not possess the power of doing good. Hence, it would follow, that devils and reprobate men, though they once were moral agents, have ceased to be so; and that, though they continue to be punished for the omission of duties, or perpetration of crimes, during the period of their moral agency; yet, at present, no duty is required of them, and, of consequence, no sin committed by them; thus the moral agent survives his moral agency, and the highest degree of malignity issues in perfect innocence. I do not pretend to assert, that all Arminians adopt the above absurd and repulsive opinion; but simply, that many of them have, to my personal knowledge, adopted, promulgated, and defended it strenuously. This opinion, also, is essentially included in their doctrine of moral

agency, and flows from it by necessary consequence. Under the notion of man's power or ability, to believe and to obey God, the Arminian includes all that the Calvinist means by natural power, and moral power, both; and contends, that the common grace of the Holy Ghost, added to the natural faculties of man, endows him with full and ample power to believe in Jesus Christ, and obey the whole law of God. If, then, the possession of this full power to obey; if the possession of both natural and moral power, be essential to constitute moral agency and responsibility, and if the common grace of the Holy Ghost be essential to the constitution of that power, it will follow, that devils who never enjoyed that common grace, and reprobate men from whom it has been withdrawn, are not moral agents at all, nor accountable for their actions; because they want that power, which is indispensible to the constitution of moral agency and responsibility. Thus they are exempts from the requisitions of the divine law, and equally incapable of doing good or evil.

Thus, while the Calvinist admits, with the Arminian, that there is a common, or universal, gift of the Spirit of Jesus bestowed upon all mankind, he does not ascribe so much influence to it; he does not assert, that it is essential to moral agency and accountableness, for he insists, that when this grace is abused, and totally withdrawn, man continues a moral and accountable agent still; neither does he assert, that it is, of itself, sufficient for salvation, but, believes that there is a superior unction of the Holy Ghost, bestowed on those who are the heirs of salvation.

III. Application of the Terms.

Some imagine, that man is possessed of every species of power, natural and moral, bestowed upon Adam at his creation; these deny depravity altogether, and maintain the perfect ability of man, to fulfil the divine law.—Others do not entirely deny corruption, but maintain, that it is slight and partial; and, that there is an inherent *vis vitæ* in the moral constitution of man, which is capable of purging away the fumes and fever of irregular passions, and of restoring him to his primitive innocence and glory. These opinions cannot be reconciled with the doctrines of the Scripture; nor can they amalgamate with the graces and duties of the christian life.

IV. Application of the Terms.

There are some who adopt a theory, which at the bottom implies that moral power, as well as natural, is essential to constitute moral agency, while they are perfectly convinced, that man does not at present possess such power; but they think that they solve all the difficulties, which attend the subject of human responsibility, by asserting that we all possessed *perfect ability in Adam*, and that having lost it by his fall, we are nevertheless held justly responsible for our actions. This subject is extremely abstract, and the speculations on it extremely refined. I do not know that I rightly comprehend them; I would not be dogmatical. But it seems to me, that to say to a sinner, you ought to obey the divine law, and justly merit punishment for transgressing it; because

God gave you full moral power in Adam; is much the same thing, as to say to an idiot, you ought to reason correctly, because God gave you a sound understanding in Adam. I cannot think that the latter would be a wise saying; and the other is so like it, that I can see no difference between them.

If I understand the Scriptures, I am personally responsible only for the talents bestowed upon myself; and I must possess in my own personality all the talents, which go to the constitution of a rational accountable moral agent. I am conscious to myself of possessing the understanding of a man, the conscience of a man, the affections of a man, the activities of a man; and it does not seem to me to be a mystery that I should be required to exercise all those powers agreeably to the law, which God has given to regulate their operations. It is the natural talents bestowed on each individual man for which that man is responsible. The scale of his natural talents and opportunities, is the scale of his responsibility. In fact our moral propensities, and our immoral propensities, have nothing at all to do in the constitution of our moral responsibility. Adam owed obedience to God's law, when he was pure and holy, and all his feelings and propensities in favour of his duty—and he was bound to obey that law after he sinned, when all his dispositions and propensities were corrupted and perverted. The worst sinner, who enjoys the Bible and the gospel, is bound to obey every law of God, which they bring to his knowledge; and the purest saint is bound to nothing more. When covetousness is admitted to be a justification of dishonesty, swindling, and theft; and malice is accepted as an apology for murder;

then may the depravity and corrupt passions of our nature, be set up as the justification of our impurities and immoralities; and the hearty love of vice, be allowed to cassate and annul the whole of our moral obligations.

Thus we see how very equivocal these terms, ABILITY, and INABILITY are, as they are used in the discussions respecting human duty and responsibility, by different sects of theological philosophers.

Man is ABLE to obey the divine law, says one—meaning what has been described as NATURAL ABILITY.

Man is UNABLE to obey the divine law, says another—meaning MORAL INABILITY.

It would be unjust in God, says one, to command his creatures to perform that for which he has given them no power—meaning what has been described as NATURAL POWER.

It is just in God, cries another, to command us to do that for which we have NO POWER—meaning MORAL POWER.

I am persuaded that the long agitated questions respecting human ability and inability, have originated, and are protracted, entirely by the ambiguity of terms; and that if the parties would only condescend to understand each other, and to attach the same ideas to the same words, they would find that they have no cause of controversy at all. I speak at present of christian men; who always allow scriptural declarations to stand as principles; and are candid enough to judge of human nature according to what they feel in themselves, and observe in others. As for that unhappy class of mankind, who never make use of their understanding, but in confounding and attempting to refute; in ridiculing, or in abusing, the

scriptural principles of truth and duty; most probably for the purpose of keeping up the flame of a forced skepticism, by continual additions of fresh fuel; in order that they may indulge their impious propensities without remorse of conscience, or the sacrifice of self esteem; and may have something wherewith to rebut the thunders of the pulpit, or the more mortifying rebukes, which noiseless christian demeanour administers to their licentiousness: as for this class of mankind, who are so distinguished for loving each others sophistries, and hating each other's persons, they must be left entirely to themselves, as wholly unworthy of consideration among the ingenuous inquirers after truth.

The danger arising from these equivocal words; *power, ability, inability, able, unable,* in our disquisitions concerning human duty, is I trust by this time sufficiently obvious. Experience has long shown, that by speculating on the general subject of human power, some men will be led into such views of their inability, or at least into such expressions respecting it, as would exempt them from the obligation of the divine law, and from all moral responsibility: while others will form such an exalted opinion of their own ability, as leaves no room for the scriptural doctrine respecting the renewing and purifying agency of the divine Spirit. Some may think that since I profess to be so sensible of this danger, I ought in reason to suggest some means of avoiding it; but it must be kept in mind, that it is not in all instances possible to furnish a remedy, even against the most palpable evils; and in the present case, were the most effectual remedy proposed, its application must be left to the will and caprice of every individual.

We need not advise mankind to drop this speculation; because it is not always in their power to comply with such an advice. When men are commanded to do their duty, and at the same time informed that they are utterly unable to perform it, unless God is graciously pleased to work in them both to will and to perform, by the immediate communication of his Holy Spirit—they can scarcely fail to ask, how can these things be? Few persons entirely escape troublesome cogitations on this subject. It would seem as if the evil were inherent in the human condition, and that it never can be removed. Certainly mankind have not, as yet, made the slightest approximation towards its removal.

I candidly acknowledge, that I have no new expedient to propose to relieve mankind from the trouble and danger connected with the subject in hand. I have no great opinion of the expedient, so often resorted to by speculators, namely, the invention of new technical terms: it is not easy to invent such terms, it is still more difficult accurately to define them, more arduous still to induce men to adopt them; and even if they were adopted, we have no security that they would not in a short time become as ambiguous as the words which they displaced. Besides it may very well admit a question, whether moral ideas are not the legitimate property of mankind, and whether they ought not therefore to be, in all instances, expressed in the common authorised words and phrases of the vulgar tongue, which have a fixed current value, and consequently are not so apt to mislead the understanding, as terms manufactured for a theory.

It cannot reasonably be expected, that the disputes concerning divine and human agency, free will and

free grace, the sovereignty of God, and the accountability of man, are likely to be soon brought to decision. The general subject has always given birth to three parties, two of which rush into extremes, diametrically opposite to each other, while the third occupies a sort of middle-ground, not very accurately defined. One of these parties argues out the principle of divine agency, till it lands in absolute fatalism; another argues out the free agency of man, till it lands in absolute independence. It is impossible to decide which of these extremes is most dangerous; both have an irreligious tendency. But, between these extremes there is found room for a third party, which includes, I believe, the great mass of humble christians. This party agrees with both the former, in respect to first principles, or the doctrine of faith. They believe with the former, that God is the prime mover, the first cause and origin of all that is good in man; and that, without his renewing and purifying grace, we can do nothing spiritually good: at the same time they admit, and insist, that man is a free agent; as free an agent as in the universe. They think, that they can produce separate and independent proof of both these doctrines, from the Scriptures on the one hand, and from philosophy on the other. They candidly acknowledge, however, that they can draw no boundary line between the free agency of God, on the one hand, and the free agency of man, on the other: nay, some of them suspect, and very candidly avow, the opinion, that they cannot conceive of the existence of any such line of distinction. These men are, accordingly, smiled on by both the other parties, as defective, either in intellect, or in courage. Each party says, if they would, or could, only listen to

reason, we should bring them to our side. But all in vain! These men can never be driven far from their fixed centre. Sweeping like a pendulum, (it is an ill conditioned metaphor, but I cannot think of a better,) their cycloid, the higher you impel them towards the doctrine of fatalism, on the one hand, the higher they ascend towards the doctrine of freedom, on the other; and, the higher you impel them towards the doctrine of human freedom, the higher do they ascend towards the sovereign grace of God. But, when the impulse of controversy ceases, they gradually gravitate towards, and finally come to rest at, their own centre—God's grace is sovereign, and man's will is free.

In respect to terms, I cannot see, that any can be invented, better than those of *natural* and *moral* ability. They are terms merely of distinction. By natural power, is meant nothing more, than that nature has given us faculties to do all that the law of God has required. By moral inability, is meant no more, than that man, in his natural state, if left to himself, cannot obey the law of God. This is Scriptural doctrine—this is actual fact. But, why all this is, as it is, human philosophy has not yet touched on. Let us have the goodness to leave something for posterity to do. The men of this age will never draw the line of distinction between divine and human agency.

Upon the whole, may we not exclaim, what a wonderful mysterious thing, is that which we denominate depravity, or the moral corruption of human nature. Nothing is more certain than the fact—nothing is more certain, than that there is some cause in human nature, which disinclines, enfeebles, and disables

us for our duty; and which on the contrary inclines, and, as it were by a secret irresistible witchery, seduces, propels, precipitates us into crimes. The fact is undoubted; it is known and acknowledged by all sorts of men. The sons of iniquity plead this very fact, as the apology and justification of their enormities; the children of God lament it as the source of their sorrows, and make it the ground of habitual humiliation before God. This is the burden under which they groan; this is that, which next to the hope of glory, reconciles them to the cold dark narrow lodging of the grave. They would wish to be holy as their God, but they are not, and they cannot be. *Vitam pro laude pasciscunt:* they are ready to give up life itself, for that which is to them preferable to life, consummate purity. They have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than human life in its fairest forms.

If this be a fair exhibition of the sentiments of all mankind; if both saints and sinners own the depravity of their common nature, the one urging it as the justification of their crimes, the other confessing it as the ground of humiliation; if the demonstrations of heathen philosophy, accord with the principles of christian devotion on this subject; and if the Sacred Scriptures unequivocally sanction the whole, what is left for any of the sons of men, but to exclaim, unclean! unclean!

Yet how unaccountable is this fact! The intellect of man is regular, it would seem, on all subjects except that of religion. You shall get a man of such trained intellect, that he can calculate by the hour, the amount of the acquisitions which he is able to make in a particular department of science; and

would venture to engage not to sleep till he had solved a certain problem; yet that man is blind to the truths of the gospel, and thinks them foolishness. What is the reason that men cannot love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength? What is the reason that christian men, whose will and inclination are entirely bent on the perfect discharge of their duty, should after all, come short of the glory of God in every thing? Why should conviction and confession of sin, supplication for pardon, self-abhorrence and abasement, form such a large part of the spiritual exercises of christian men? Human nature is prone to evil, say the Scriptures; human nature is prone to evil, cries the statesman, while he seeks by legal threats, prisons, gibbets, armies, navies, so far to restrain those evil propensities, that men may be able to maintain the relations of social life; human nature is prone to evil, exclaims the infidel, and makes the strength of that propensity, its justification.

Still it is true, that the malignant passions, or in general terms, the corruption of human nature, do not abolish moral responsibility, nor annul the divine law, nor apologise for our crimes, nor mitigate the divine judgment on our conduct. Here ends the present chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MODERN THEORY OF ATONEMENT.—A REVIEW OF GETHSEMANE, OR THOUGHTS ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE REFUGE," AND "THE GUIDE TO DOMESTIC HAPPINESS." FIRST AMERICAN, FROM THE SECOND LONDON EDITION. PHILADELPHIA, PUBLISHED BY ANTHONY FINLAY, 1817. PP. 208.

CIRCUMSTANCES very different from my own estimate of its merit, induce me to notice this publication. In the month of August, 1817, I published at Philadelphia, a small work, entitled "THE FIEND OF THE REFORMATION DETECTED;" the object of which was to expose certain sophistical theories of religion. In the month of October following, was republished at the same place, the theological work GETHSEMANE. The publication was recommended by two gentlemen, (who do not need to be informed of the affection which I cherish for them,) in the following strong terms:

"Gethsemane, or thoughts on the sufferings of Christ, a little work by the author of the Guide, and Refuge; (which have been deservedly popular in America,) is the best discussion, from an uninspired pen, of the nature, extent, and design of the sufferings of our Saviour, which we have ever read; and

we cordially recommend it to the communicants of our respective churches, as being worthy of their devout attention." October 20th, 1817.

In a short time after its publication, there appeared a Review of Gethsemane; supposed to be written by one of the gentlemen, who signed the recommendation; and published in a periodical work of which he was editor. In this review the peculiar principles of Gethsemane were studiously placed in high relief, as the very essence of orthodoxy and evangelical truth. Three months afterwards, appeared in the same paper a review of my publication, supposed to be written by the same hand. In this review of course, the principles of Gethsemane are brought into strong collision with mine, and direct reference made from the one review to the other.

I would, by no means, be understood to complain of this conduct in two highly respected friends; on the contrary, I frankly declare, that I think they did exactly their duty, and I prize them for it. They thought me in a dangerous error, and were afraid that I might be the unhappy instrument of diffusing, or confirming, that error among others. They therefore, like friends to truth and to mankind, hasted to put into our hands a work, which they judged the best human production on the subject. Judging that those who engage in the investigation of truth, espepecially religious truth, ought to pay great deference to each other's judgment; and that when one asserts that certain arguments have satisfied him, the other whatever may be his opinions, should examine those arguments with candour and care; I procured Gethsemane, and during two years have read it carefully over, I dare say, five or six times. I think it but a

just respect to my two friends, to submit to them the reasons, which compel me to entertain an opinion of Gethsemane, very different from that which they have expressed; and I request them to pay the same respect to my judgment, which I have paid to theirs, by giving their deliberate attention not merely to what may be offered in the present chapter, but to the contents of this whole volume. I confess also, that as the present controversy is fully and extensively before the public, and carried on with great vigour and animation; I thought that my credit required, that I should not pass, with an entire silence, over a set treatise of such pretensions, and so respectably recommended as Gethsemane. To all which a third reason was added, namely, that I thought that Gethsemane would furnish me with a fair occasion of exposing the sophistries, which compose the modern theory of atonement.

On looking over Gethsemane, the first thing which strikes us, is the unparalleled and prodigious display of theological reading which it exhibits: no work of the same size ever, perhaps, presented such a catalogue of learned divines as vouchers. The author quotes Dr. Owen, David Clarkson, Toplady, bishop Reynolds, Mr. M'Laurin, Dr. Pye Smith, Hurrion, bishop Brown, L. Butterworth, Dr. Bates, Mr. Eyre, professor Durham, Dr. Edwards, Rawlin, Dr. Arrowsmith, Boston, bishop Leighton, Mr. Haynes, Maclean, bishop Hopkins, Dr. Isaac Chauncey, Watson, Mr. Brooks, Du Moulin, Dr. Manton, bishops Hall, Carleton, Salisbury, &c. Dr. Ward, Dr. Ames, Mr. Gillespie, Dr. Gill, Dr. Erskine, Mr. Baxter, Dr. E. Williams, bishop Stillingfleet, Charnock, Riccaltoun, Norton, Howe. bishop Horseley. Saunderson. Mr. Brine,

archbishop Usher, Burkitt, president Dickinson, Booth, Zanchius, Sladen, and perhaps some others.

This is an overwhelming catalogue; few clergymen possess such a library, as the works of these authors would form; fewer still have read half so many theological works. I should be anxious to know how the author came by all these quotations. If he took them from a common place book; and if he extracted with equal liberality, on every theological subject, his industry must have been inconceivable. There is, however, another way in which the work may have been composed. His principle, it appears, was fixed and immutable; he may, therefore, by means of the tables of contents, and indexes, have consulted the works which he has cited, on the particular topics of election and atonement, and extracted the quotations which he has given us. No man, practised in literary pursuits, can doubt, that this was the manner in which the book was actually composed; because it is the only hypothesis, which he can think morally possible.

It is interesting, to inquire into the age, when this man's authorities lived. I am not acquainted with the writings of them all; but, it is certain, that the greater part of them lived subsequent to the synod of Dort, many of them in the Cromwellian age, and some still later. Now, it is well known, that the writers of neither sect, I mean the Arminian and Calvinistic sects, can, after that period, be admitted as of any authority. At that period, they plunged into the abyss of metaphysics; and any one who will read their writings, may extract from them, the wildest speculations inimical to the gospel. I see one name quoted, which astonishes me; it is that of archbishop Usher; if the writer meant to allege the authority of

the archbishop, in favour of his hypothesis, he is very unlucky; the archbishop was a Calvinist, and maintained the merit of Christ's blood, to save all men, and its particular application to all who believe. This casts a shade over the author; for, if he quoted the authority of archbishop Usher, in his favour, whilst it is directly against him, may he not have done the same with others? The fact is, his overswoln list of authorities is without any authority.*

But, there is a more extraordinary phenomenon still, in this work. If he meant to establish his theory by the authority of reformed divines, why has he not produced quotations from Luther and Calvin? Were they not to be reckoned members in the theological community? Is it possible, that a British divine, who has written at least three several treatises on religion, had never heard the names of Luther and Calvin? Is it possible, that he should write a treatise on atonement, which rests principally on the authority of divines, and not examine whether Luther and Calvin were on his side? Was it possible, that he who had access to such hordes of bishops, doctors, and theologians, should, in the narrow isle of England, covered with cities, colleges, and libraries all over, could have found any difficulty in procuring a reading of the works of Luther and Calvin? Not at all! Who can doubt, that he consulted these first reformers? And, if he did, he must have found, that THEY WERE AGAINST HIM. Would he have omitted to quote their authority, had it made for him? Certainly not. But, why did he not mention their doctrine on the extent of atonement? The most honourable conjecture is, that his modesty would not permit him to repre-

* See Usher's judgment, in a preceding part of this work.

sent Luther and Calvin as corrupters of the doctrine of atonement: and here let the matter rest. But, he has opposed their doctrine with all his might.

Another point. The numerous confessions of the reformed churches are generally appealed to, as of some authority in matters of doctrine. Why did he not consult any of these, and produce their authority? Perhaps he forgot them; perhaps he set no value upon them; or, perhaps he knew that they are against him! And, here again, modesty imposed silence; lest his doctrine should seem to be, as it is, at war with that of the reformed churches. This modesty is a charming virtue, when it preserves its own consistency. If, while this author passed over Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Wickliffe, Cranmer, and other original reformers, he had also preserved a similar silence, in respect to the opinions of that long list of modern divines, (some of them obscure enough:) and, if he had investigated the Scriptures for their doctrine, on the subject, he would have pleased me better; and, I should have taken his own opinion, supported by Scripture, with his name, or without his name, in preference to all the authority of all the names he has quoted.

A work composed almost entirely of quotations, will ever be narrow in argument, and barren in information. The present work is most superabundant in quotation, but the narrowest in range of thought, and the most scanty in logical display of any thing I ever saw. The quotations all relate to a single subject: and we are lashed round the same narrow circle of argumentation, page after page, till our hearts are dizzy: and those who are not accustomed to the arts of sophis-

try, are glad to believe any thing, to get rid of their trouble.

But the great and characteristic defect of the book is, that there is not in the whole of it a manly attempt; or any thing like a manly attempt, to demonstrate the main doctrine from the Scriptures, by shewing that it is the direct and intentional meaning of some passages of Scripture, and that without it they have no meaning at all. It is true, that the authors quoted, sometimes introduce a text of Scripture; and the author himself sometimes, though very rarely, introduces a text. But surely the reader must admit, that if the main doctrine of this treatise be, as it professes to be, the grand fundamental truth of christianity, or at least one of its fundamental truths; a truth without which a proper atonement cannot be supported; nor the attributes of God vindicated in the salvation of sinners; it must be taught plainly, frequently, abundantly all over the Scriptures. Why were not the Scriptures which are supposed to support this doctrine produced in plenty, and fully analysed? Because they were no where to be found! I shall produce as a sample of the author's mode of reasoning on Scripture the following passage.

Page 32. "Our blessed Lord himself hath told us that he came into the world to do the will of his father," one branch of which was, "that he should give eternal life to as many as the father had given him." These were the sheep for whom he laid down his life, and concerning whom he said, "they shall never perish."

What now is the conclusion he draws from this? "But that numbers of our apostate race do perish, is evident beyond contradiction; we are therefore com-

pelled from his own testimony to believe that he never laid down his life for them: and if he never laid down his life for them, how could he suffer for them?"

Let us examine this piece of logic.

One branch of the will of God, he says, was that Jesus "should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him."

These are the sheep for whom he laid down his life.

And concerning whom he said, "they shall never perish."

Now all I can learn from this is, that one branch of the will of God is, that Jesus should lay down his life for the elect—and bring them to eternal life.

But as this is only one branch of the will of God, the author's limitation implies, that the will of God may have other branches, at least one other branch.

Now what if Jesus's laying down his life for the rest of mankind, offering them eternal life through his blood, and punishing their unbelief in the judgment day, should be that one other branch of the divine will! I do not here say it is: but for any thing the author has said it may be.

He establishes purely affirmative principles. It was the will of God that Jesus Christ should die for the elect and give eternal life to the elect; Jesus Christ died for the elect, and gives eternal life to the elect.

And from these affirmative principles, in defiance of all the rules of logic, and of common sense, he draws the negative conclusion that Jesus did not die for the rest of mankind, or to avoid misconstruction there is no merit in the blood of Christ, which could possibly save the unelected. I mean at present not to establish any thing of a doctrinal nature; but to point out the illogi-

cal reasoning of this author; and the total want of connection between his premises and his conclusions.

But perhaps (for metaphysical divines are extremely cautious in the collocation of their words) perhaps by the phrase: These were the sheep, he may mean that these were exclusively, the sheep for whom Jesus shed his blood; or in other words, whom his blood is capable of saving. And here again he is guilty of another sophism; for this is precisely the *petitio principii*, or begging the question, that the shed blood of Jesus cannot possibly save the unelect.

His quotation from Hurrion is brought forward with equal want of discrimination. "The righteous God, as Mr. Hurrion expresses it, did not lay upon his own son more than was right; he did not spare him, or abate him any thing, nor did he inflict more punishment than sin deserved." Whether Mr. Hurrion and the author agreed in judgment on the opinion in question, I do not know; but I am sure that no man who admits the atonement at all, will refuse assenting to the quotation from Hurrion. No body ever believed that God spared his son, for the scriptures say that he "spared not his own son, but gave him up freely to the death for us all;" no body ever believed that God inflicted upon him more punishment than sin deserved; for infliction beyond the measure of guilt, is not punishment, but cruelty, of which God is incapable.

What does the author mean by this quotation from Hurrion? He means that if Jesus Christ had suffered for the sins of all men, he would have suffered more than was due to the sins of the elect, and that God would have been unjust, and Christ oppressed

by such infliction. And here again is the old sophism the *petitio principii*, or begging the question, that the sufferings of Christ are exactly equal to the guilt of the elect. Which we deny, and call for proof.

Let us therefore proceed to demolish this whole system of sophistries. But before we go, I beg to make a remark. It may perhaps be suspected, that I have selected a singularly weak part of this book for the above analysis. I really do not know that to be the case; I certainly did intend no such thing. I believe the passage quoted to be a fair sample; and do not hesitate to affirm my belief, that every thing belonging to the system, if examined in the same manner, would be disposed of in the same way.

THE MODERN THEORY OF ATONEMENT.

Page 1. "The more I reflect on what passed at our last interview, the more I am convinced that the sufferings of Christ were in exact proportion to the guilt of the many sinners he has undertaken to redeem; and that had the unworthy objects of his merciful regard been more numerous, these sufferings would have been augmented."

This is the whole theory, expressed in the usual verbose manner of the author; the meaning cannot be mistaken. The amount is this, that Jesus Christ has suffered enough to save the elect; but not enough to save any one else. Now I assert that this author has not, and that no other author yet has, proved this doctrine, from the law and testimony of God; and of consequence that no man is bound to adopt it as an article of christian faith. Again, I assert that I have demonstrated from the Holy Scriptures

that Jesus Christ has suffered enough to save the whole human race, which principle therefore ought to be adopted as an article of the christian faith; and farther, I have proved that this doctrine was held and maintained by Luther and Calvin, and propagated by them, both by tongue and pen, and that, therefore, it ought to be held as a doctrine of the reformed church.

It is this *petitio principii,* or gratuitous assumption of his doctrine, which forms the whole of his book. Take it away and the book evanishes; yet this principle is not proved to be scriptural. It is supported by the following sophisms.

I. Sophism.

Page 37. "Divine justice might be charged with injustice in exacting a double payment for the same debt:" page 34, he says, on the supposition that Christ died for all men: "The surety and the sinner would suffer for the same crime." I shall state this argument in a more formal manner.

It is inconsistent with divine justice to exact a double payment of the same debt.

But if Christ paid the debt of the whole human race, and God exacts it of any of them.

Then is God unjust. *Quod, absurdum est.*

Ans. God is every day doing what the above argument proves to be unjust; consequently the argument is a sophism.

I have only to prove my assertion, in order to establish the conclusion; which I do thus, that Jesus Christ has paid the debt of the elect, our opponents will admit (and we include this in our doctrine of general atonement) and that he received

a discharge in full, a legal acquittance, in his resurrection from the dead, the apostle teaches Rom. vi. 9—10. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dodominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Here then we have a full payment of the debt of the elect by their surety, Christ; and a full discharge from the just judge, by his resurrection.

But elect men may live half a century, before they have faith in Jesus; all this time the law has them by the neck, saying pay me what ye owe; as the apostle teaches, Eph. ii. 1—3. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; and were by nature children of wrath even as others." If then previous to their being quickened by God, and exercising faith in his Son, the elect are dead in sin, and children of wrath, God does exact of them a payment of that very debt, which Christ has paid, and for which he has received a legal acquittance.

Our opponents are now welcome to the benefit of their own argument; which does indeed prove that God is unjust; or their logic, sophistry. They will, no doubt, choose, with us, the latter alternative. And if so, we shall try to help them to unravel the sophistry. It is apparent from the text quoted, and from all the Bible, that so long as the sinner does not plead the payment of his debt by Christ; divine justice demands payment of himself; and if he should to all eternity refuse to accept Christ's payment, he would be required to pay his own debt. Whenever he pleads Christ's

payment he is acquitted; if he never pleads Christ's payment, he is never acquitted. And this view of the subject, leads us to the remedial system, which is the burden of this whole treatise.

The figurative expression of debt in this case, has been grossly abused, by some speculators, who have interpreted it literally; and argued that as Christ has paid the elect's debt, they are acquitted before they believe. Which would be true enough, if the figure be made to coincide in all things, with the object which it represents; for if my security, agent, or attorney, pays my debt; my creditor would be unjust to demand it again of me. Let us therefore (for this is a most important subject) drop the figure, and state the argument in other terms.

THE SAME SOPHISM IN ANOTHER DRESS.

It would not be just in God to exact satisfaction twice for the same crime.

But Jesus has made satisfaction for the crimes of the elect.

Therefore, it would be unjust in God to exact a second satisfaction from themselves.

Ans. God is every day doing the thing, which this argument proves to be unjust. For so long as the elect reject the satisfaction of Christ by unbelief, so long God exacts satisfaction of themselves; and if their rejection were to continue to eternity, so long would his exaction continue.

Suppose, therefore, that Christ made satisfaction for all, and that some accept, some reject, it; the former would be saved, the latter damned; notwithstanding the general nature of the satisfaction.

II. Sophism.

It would be inconsistent with the wisdom of God, that his Son should make satisfaction, and provide salvation, for those who never are saved by that satisfaction.

But many never obtain salvation through the satisfaction of Christ.

Therefore, as God is wise, no atonement was made, nor salvation provided for those who finally perish.

Ans. God has done the very thing which the above argument proves to be contrary to his wisdom: consequently God is unwise, or else the argument is a sophism. I have, therefore, only to prove my assertion, in order to establish the sophistry of this logic. To the Scriptures then—we go.

Luke xiv. 16—24. "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the

servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."

The lord of the Feast is Jehovah.

The supper the body and blood of Christ.

The servant the gospel ministry.

The guests previously invited the Jews.

Those in the streets, lanes, highways, and hedges, the poor wretched Gentiles.

It is therefore consistent with the wisdom, and with every other perfection of God, to provide salvation by Christ's broken body and shed blood for those who refuse it, and prefer a bit of land, a few oxen, a wife, or some other worldly possession to Christ and his salvation; it is consistent with the wisdom of God, to send the gospel ministry to invite and command men to accept salvation in Christ, who reject it; it is consistent with the wisdom, and goodness, and justice, of God, to be angry with those who reject his messengers, his message, and his salvation, in their day of grace, in this world; and to declare that they shall never enjoy it.

Of consequence the argument which decides that all this is contrary to the divine wisdom, is a sophism.

III. Sophism.

It would be inconsistent with the goodness of God, to inflict upon his Son an amount of sufferings adequate to the salvation of all men, if all are not saved.

But it is plain from the scriptural account of the day of judgment, that all men will not be saved.

Therefore, God did not lay on his Son an amount of suffering, adequate to the salvation of all men.

ANS. This argument assumes as true THE MODERN THEORY OF ATONEMENT, which we have proved to be a sophism.

IV. SOPHISM.

Every drop of Christ's blood, which may be supposed to be shed for those who are not saved, was shed in vain, thrown away for nought, and lost.

But not one drop of his blood was shed in vain, thrown away, or lost.

Therefore, not a drop of his blood was shed for those who are not saved.

ANS. This must be a very imposing sophism, for, I think, I have heard it oftener urged than any other. It consists in fact of two sophisms curiously complicated; like two rattlesnakes mysteriously coiled together, presenting here a head and a tail, and there a tail and a head; so that none but a practised viper catcher, would venture to touch them. And yet when severed and separated, they are the most inert, innoxious things in the world. Let us countercharm these snakes.

I. SOPHISM.

It supposes that the blood of Jesus was shed in so many separate drops for so many individuals; a small drop, no doubt, for a small sinner, and a large drop for a great sinner; thus if there are ten sinners saved, ten drops are shed; if one hundred are saved, one hundred drops are shed; if one thousand, one thou-

sand, &c.* Consequently the whole of his blood was not shed for any man; and no man can say, Christ DIED for me.—After all, what is this but the sophistical assumption of the NEW THEORY OF ATONEMENT. See page 347.

The truth revealed in the Scriptures, is that the whole of his blood, and the whole of his obedience, constitute his righteousness, which is the righteousness of the law, and goes whole and entire to every believer, to deliver him from the curse of the law.

II. SOPHISM.

The second snake in the coil, or the second sophism in the above complex sophistry, is also the old thing, a *petitio principii*, a gratuitous assumption of what cannot be proved true, and which shall be proved false.

It assumes the fact, that the blood of Christ, or his atonement, or his righteousness, is of no use whatever in the moral government of God, except in so far as it affects those who are saved. But may it not possibly answer some good purpose, for the glory of God, even in respect to those who perish? Do the temporal mercies of God, to those who perish, redound nothing to his glory? Does the preaching of his gospel to those who perish, redound nothing to his glory? Do the long strivings of his spirit with those who perish, redound nothing to his glory? Let these questions be answered in the affirmative, and then it follows, that a

* An ingenious young friend, after having read some of the recent publications on this subject, observed to me, "If their doctrine be true, no man is justified by the righteousness of Christ; for no man can have the whole of it." An unquestionably sound conclusion.

most extensive range of divine action, contributes nothing to the glory of the divine agent! Or, in other words, is absolutely dishonourable to him! I defy the ingenuity of man to keep clear of this conclusion. God's goodness, his gospel, the strivings of his spirit, do not issue in the salvation of those who perish! They promote his glory nevertheless, they are not lost, they are not in vain.

Now suppose, (by hypothesis, for I shall at present waive the fact) that Jesus had shed his blood for the salvation of mankind; and that some determined rebels, treading that blood under their feet, should perish; would the shedding of his blood, in respect to them, contribute nothing to the divine glory? Would not the shed blood of Christ co-operate with God's providential bounty, his gospel, and the strivings of his spirit; to demonstrate the infinite goodness, mercy, and grace of Jehovah; and to satisfy the universe that God is merciful, and that the rebels perish justly? I am sure every just reasoner will answer in the affirmative.

But if any should answer in the negative, he shall have the full benefit of his own logic.

1. The shedding of the blood of Christ for those who are lost is not to the glory of God—because they are not saved!

2. The providential goodness of God to those who are lost, is not to his glory—because it does not bring them to repentance and eternal life!

3. The preaching of the gospel to those who are lost is not to the glory of God—because it does not bring them to heavenly glory!

4. The strivings of God's Spirit with those who are lost is not to his glory—because they are not converted and brought to everlasting life!

Of consequence God derives no glory for any good, which he ever displayed to the sinners, who perish.

Now, either God derives some glory from those lost sinners, or he does not.

If he derives no glory from them, then it is no longer true, "that all his works praise him;" he made these men in vain! which is blasphemy in one shape!

If he does derive glory from them; since it has been demonstrated, that this glory does not flow from his goodness to them; it follows that it must flow exclusively from the outpouring of his wrath upon them!

And then again, as God created all things for his own glory; it follows, that he created these men, as the intentional objects of his wrath—and that he derives no other glory from them, than that of tormenting them on earth, and tormenting them in the flames of hell for ever!

This is the blasphemy of blasphemies. I will not dignify it with the name of atheism; it is a thousand times worse than atheism, in its worst shape. It not only annihilates GOD, but, in his room, it sets up the DEVIL.

I have now examined THE MODERN THEORY OF ATONEMENT. I have, very formally, and I do not hesitate to add, very fairly, and, in all their energy, stated all the arguments which I recollect at present, to have heard in defence of this theory. I see them, perhaps all, at least some of them, loosely scattered over the pages of Gethsemane; and, I am not afraid, that any one will allege, that they have suffered any diminution of force in my statement. Indeed, when-

ever a man has the right side of a cause, it is his interest and policy to state the arguments of his opponent, in their clearest, and most impressive form; for the better they are stated, the more easily will they be refuted. But, to drop moral argument, and resort to the *ultima ratio theologorum*, I shall prove from Scripture, that the salvation by Jesus, proclaimed to all men in the gospel, does redound to the glory of God, as well in respect to those who are lost, as to those who are saved.

2. Cor. ii. 14—16. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for those things?"

Thus the gospel ministry, which proclaims salvation to all men, through the blood of Christ, is in all cases, and in all events, glorious to God; it is unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are SAVED, and in them that are LOST. It proves, that the God of goodness, whose name is Love, brought salvation into our world, out of pure mercy, grace, love, and goodness; and freely offered it to mankind at large: those who accept that salvation, are an everlasting monument of the love of God; and those who reject that salvation, are an everlasting monument of his justice, nay, of his goodness too; and, of his doubly just justice; for, when they were sinners, and deserved his wrath, he sent them salvation, and they refused to have it. And, since the rebels refuse pardon, what

ought, what can be done, with them. Die they, or justice must!

In closing these strictures on the metaphysical structure of this theory, I may add, that if any other arguments may have been used in its defence, than those which have been noticed; or, if any should hereafter be invented, they may all be refuted by the mode of investigation pursued above. The theory itself is directly contrary to the Scriptures; and any thing, which, by fair logic, can be made to afford it support, must be a presumptuous assumption.

Reader, whenever you hear a man asserting, that the perfections of God, bind him to act in a certain way—ask yourself, has God ever acted in that way? If you cannot find an instance, beware how you assert, that he is bound to act in a manner, in which, so far as you know, he never yet has acted. And, when you hear a man asserting, that certain conduct would be unworthy of God—ask yourself, has God ever acted thus? Ten thousand times you will find, that God has done the very thing which theologians and metaphysicians, are asserting to be contrary to his perfections.

The erroneous theory of atonement advanced by the author of Gethsemane, which I now consider as fully refuted, had a most deplorable effect upon his own mind as a preacher of the gospel. He could not, and he did not, offer salvation to any sinner. To the free grace of the universal gospel call, he was stone-blind; and when he comes to treat that subject, he gropes about in the dark, lost and forlorn. He takes up the gospel call professedly, in his last letter, and it must excite feelings of deep distress in every feeling bosom, to behold into what

inextricable difficulties his theory has involved him, upon what I do not hesitate to pronounce one of the plainest subjects in the whole Bible, or in the universe; a subject, which God has rendered so clear, that I cannot conceive the possibility of making it clearer; namely that free salvation is to be preached to all mankind, without limitation or exception. I shall make a few quotations from this concluding part of his book.

Page 196. "All important however as are the doctrines of election and redemption, the exhibition of these truths is far from being the primary, or the constant, duty of a minister of Christ. In the pulpit he has, more or less, always to do with men who are hostile to the moral government of God; who are daily living in actual rebellion against him; but who, notwithstanding, are neither aware of the situation, nor of their danger. It will, therefore, be his principal endeavour to convince them of their daring presumption and their guilt.—Of their being righteously exposed to the curse of the law, and that dying in such a state they will inevitable perish."

Here closes the paragraph, and the subject of preaching the gospel to sinners is dropt. He does not say that preaching the pure law, is the ONLY thing, which a preacher has to do with sinners; but that it is the PRINCIPAL thing. I beg leave to say, that it is neither the ONLY, nor yet the PRINCIPAL thing. The law is a schoolmaster to bring sinners to Christ; and unless Christ is exhibited, as the end of the law for righteousness, I assert, that the gospel has not been preached at all! Is it the *principal* business of a surgeon to probe a wound? No! He probes the wound, to apply the plaster,

or whatever may be the mean to save the patient's life. In like manner the gospel minister, the surgeon and physician of souls, convinces sinners that they are sinners, only to lead them to him who is the Saviour of sinners. Shall I call a physician barely to tell me I am sick? No, but I ask him is there any cure? Yes! says the gospel, the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin!

Page 194. "Men are not called upon to decide whether redemption be particular or general; they are called to believe that they are sinners against God, and justly exposed to the curse denounced by the law against them as transgressors."

Here closes the paragraph. And, in the next, he takes up another subject. I shall only say, that this is a very narrow creed; which, as he tells us, men as sinners are required to believe; the devils believe it all and tremble; and there is not one word of the gospel in it.

In page 201, there is something which looks rather better. "He (the preacher) is therefore indefatigable in his endeavours to convince men of their sins, to warn them of their danger, and to point to him who hath said, 'Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else, a just God and a Saviour.'"

Well did our Lord say, "Search the Scriptures; for they are they which testify of me." By introducing one of our divine Lord's gospel calls, he has introduced the gospel, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." This is gospel! A free invitation, an authoritative command, to all the ends of the earth, to look to him for salvation, who was both able and willing to give it—"For I am God and there is

none else." All this I understand; but what a poor heartless comment does he tag to this text of Scripture —"A just God—and a Saviour!"

Fugite hinc, O pueri, latet anguis in herba.

No doubt he is a just God, and a Saviour! But what has this to do with the call, "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth."

Was it the author's view, that all mankind should look towards the Son of God; one part of them, to look to him as a just God, come to pour wrath upon them for their crimes; another part to look to him as their Saviour! I confess, I can make nothing else of his language. This author did not believe that all the ends of the earth, were authorized to look to Jesus for salvation; but as all are commanded to look to him, this writer presumes that, some of them are authorised to look only for justice. So much did this pestiferous theory blind his eyes! I say, blind his eyes, for blinded a man must be, who does not perceive that this text calls upon all the ends of the earth, to look to the Son of God for salvation, and not for wrath; "look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is none else."

And yet the following passages from page 202, and page 203, might lead us to suppose, that this writer had a correct view of the gospel. "With regard to scriptural exhortations, or promises, that refer to spiritual concerns, and which are urged on the hearer by the advocates for general redemption, I know of none that their opponents may not readily adopt. I say exhortations or promises, that refer to spiritual concerns; because there are many connected with the Sinai covenant which refer to the present life only, that are often injudiciously pressed into this service."

There is an excess of caution in the phraseology of this paragraph, which renders the sentiment so safe as to be almost nugatory. With respect to "scriptural exhortations or promises," doubtless this author will agree with his opponents, provided he is allowed to determine what these exhortations and promises are, and what is their meaning. The real question at issue is, are all men exhorted to turn to the Son of God for eternal life, and is that life promised to them, provided they so turn? Yes, saith the Lord; no, saith Gethsemane.

As the author speaks of the advocates of "general redemption;" I must observe that there are no less than three classes of them, distinguished by essential characters.

1. Some maintain that redemption is general in its nature, and eventually in its application; this class includes all the redemptional universalists: a class of men whom I believe to be in an error—but who ought never to be confounded with the infidel universalists.

2. Some maintain that redemption is general in its nature, and that God has determined nothing respecting its application; but left that matter entirely to the free will of his creatures; or at least to the free will of his creatures, under the influence of what have been called the common influences of the Spirit of God; those influences which Calvin, and other divines, agreeably to Scripture, assert to be the origin of all our social virtues; and absolutely necessary to the support of human society. This class includes a considerable portion of those who are generally termed Arminians. Perhaps it is the feature of that class. According to this class

all may be saved, or all may be lost, the generality or universality of the atonement notwithstanding.

3. Some maintain that the redemption is, in its own nature, general, or universal, and capable of saving all mankind; and that God offers it to all, and leaves it to their own free will, aided by the general grace of his spirit bestowed on all men, and necessary to the support of moral society among them, whether they will profit by it or not: but that by, what some of them call the irresistible; and others, more modest, the efficacious operations of his spirit, he secures the certain application of this redemption to some, but not to all members of the human family. This was Calvin's doctrine.

Now I would wish to know, whether the author of Gethsemane, would make the same use of the exhortations, and promises of the Scriptures, which this last class of preachers make. Would he make a free offer of salvation through Christ, to every poor sinner, who sat under his ministry? or who happened to straggle into the place where he was preaching? Would he command every mortal man, within the reach of his voice, to obey the son of God, who commands all men to come to him for life? Oh, No!

The following are his views.

"If the gospel be faithfully preached, the ministers of both parties will have to exhibit the same Saviour, and the same salvation—to announce that he to whom the sinner must look for mercy, is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, and that him who cometh, he will in no wise cast out.—That, however enormous, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin—that whosoever will

may take of the water of life freely; and that he that liveth and believeth in him, shall never perrish."

The above is true as far as it goes; namely, that Jesus Christ is able to save all who actually do come, to him, that all who are made willing to take the water of life shall enjoy it.—But did the author admit that Jesus was able to save any but the elect? The following passage shows that he did not. "But then as to the provision, is it for all? Yes, for all that repent and believe the gospel." For the rest he asserts, that no provision was made. The following clause detects exactly the two ideas, which this author and those who hold with him, confound. "You would not surely have the preacher announce that it is for those who neither do the one nor the other, *for he that believeth not shall be damned.*" He confounds the *provision*, and the *enjoyment* of salvation. We assert that provision is made for all, and offered to all; and that he who receiveth it by faith shall enjoy it. He believed, that provision was made only for the elect; but as he could not distinguish the elect from the non-elect, previous to conversion, he is at a loss to say how the gospel should be preached to sinners. Whenever a man hesitates, or quibbles, or qualifies, about the duty of the gospel minister to offer salvation in Christ's name to all sinners; and to command them to accept it, set him down as spoiled with false philosophy.

I now take leave of Gethsemane. It is not in the spirit of uncivil irony, nor even in that of good humoured pleasantry, but in solemn seriousness that I thank the reverend gentlemen, who recommended the Philadelphia edition of this work, and who were probably the means of bringing that work before

the public. I am willing to take their recommendation in its real moral meaning, that they consider Gethsemane the best statement of a particular theory of atonement, which they have ever read. This publication has saved me the trouble of searching after that theory, in less perfect productions. Of the modest, fine tempered, and amiable author of Gethsemane, there can be but one opinion among honourable men: respecting the value of his work, there can be, it seems, two very opposite opinions. I have given the reasons upon which I found my opinion; and have no doubt that they will receive from candid men whatever attention they deserve.

There is a subject which much interests my curiosity. The author of the "Guide" and "Refuge," appears from his writings to have been an English particular Baptist; and I suspect an opponent of Andrew Fuller, when that man undertook and effected, a valuable revolution in the doctrine and preaching of his party. I am inclined to suspect that Mr. Fuller, is in fact, the unnamed opponent to whom Gethsemane is addressed, in the form of letters. These conjectures have been excited by reading the life of Andrew Fuller, written by Dr. John Ryland, which lately fell into my hands. A few extracts from this work, cannot fail to be gratifying to the reader; they may also prove serviceable to those among ourselves, who wish to read the existing state of religious society, from the living volume.

Page 3. "The English Baptists have been usually divided into two distinct bodies, by their different views of the doctrines of grace. The general Baptists, are so called from their maintaining the sentiment of general redemption. Many of the old

churches of this sort, have gone from general redemption, to no redemption; or, from Arminianism to Arianism and Socinianism. But, the churches of what are called the new connection, are far more evangelical; and some of them approach nearly to the principles of the moderate Calvinists."

Page 4. "The particular Baptists espouse the Calvinistic sentiments, on what are called the five points." "In their zeal for these doctrines, some good men, towards the beginning of the last century, were driven into an extreme, so as to deny, that all who hear the gospel are called to that exercise of repentance and faith, which is connected with salvation. As far as I can learn this controversy, respecting what was then termed the *modern question*—whether it be the duty of all men, to whom the gospel is published, to repent and believe in Christ, first arose in Northumberland." In page 5, he represents a Mr. Lewis Wayman, of Kimbolton, as writing, in support of the modern opinion, that it is not the duty of the unregenerate to believe in Christ; this work was published in 1737 or 1738. The biographer mentions, that through the influence of Dr. Gill, and Mr. Brine, both of whom took the negative side, this opinion spread pretty generally among the Baptists. "And though the controversy had subsided, and was but little known among the people; yet, the preachers were too much restrained from imitating our Lord, and his apostles, in calling upon sinners to repent, and believe the gospel. About the same time," he informs us, "that some of the Calvinistic Methodists, especially in lady Huntingdon's connection, were becoming tinged with false Calvinism. These were not led into it, like the admirers of Mr. Brine and Dr. Gill, by reading a

great deal of controversial divinity, or by a polemical discussion of the five points disputed between us and the Arminians; but, by a vague, crude idea of the term POWER, which led them to suppose, that nothing could be a bad man's duty, but what he could perform without any special influence from God."

At length, several of the ministers began to examine the question, without any concert, or mutual knowledge, of what they were about: the consequence, we are informed, was a conviction, that they had needlessly deviated from the Scripture path, in which the most orthodox of their predecessors had been used to walk. Among the successful investigators of this modern question, was Andrew Fuller: and, such was the value he placed upon his solution, that he made a strong and effectual stand, in behalf of the truth, against modern innovation. The biographer makes Mr. Fuller tell his own story. There is something extremely interesting in the struggles which he had with the sophistries of his age; we shall give the narrative in his own words.

Page 7. "My father and mother," says he, "were dissenters of the Calvinistic persuasion, who were in the habit of hearing Mr. Eve, a baptist minister; who being, what is here termed, *high*, or tinged with false Calvinism, had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. I, therefore, never considered myself as any way concerned in any thing I heard from the pulpit. Nevertheless, by reading and reflecting, I was sometimes strongly impressed in a way of conviction." In page 13, where, in narrating the torments of his mind, while labouring under conviction of sin, without knowing the way of salvation,—"I was not then aware, that any poor sinner had a war-

rant to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul; but, supposed there must be some kind of qualification to entitle him to do it; yet, I was sure that I had no qualifications." "At last, however," says he, "I found rest for my troubled soul, and, I reckon, that I should have found it sooner—"

The mind of Mr. Fuller was honest and inquisitive, and he was frequently involved in investigations, some of which terminated in an increase of knowledge, others in a conviction that the problems were useless. He thus speaks of his final delivery from what he calls Hyper-Calvinism. Page 28. "The next year, 1775, I visited London; where I met with a pamphlet, the contents of which revived all my doubts on what was called the high Calvinistic system, or the system of Dr. Gill, Mr. Brine, and others, as to the duty of sinners, and of ministers in addressing them. It was written by Dr. Abraham Taylor of London. It was not so much his reasoning, however, as the passages of Scripture which he brought forward, which made so deep an impression on my mind, that I could not forget them, nor help feeling, that my preaching was anti-scriptural, and defective in many respects." In fine, Mr. Fuller became an avowed and unwearied advocate for the unqualified duty of every preacher to urge faith and repentance on every sinner; and the unqualified right and duty of every sinner to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

The author of Gethsemane adopted the opposite side of the question; and wrote against Fuller's views: and I suspect addressed these letters to Fuller* himself. It will certainly be an amusing inci-

* Such was my conjecture when the above was written. It was right. In a private room, sometime after writing the passage, I took up a book; it was

dent in human affairs, if we should find a hero who was vanquished, disarmed, and fairly put down in his own country; brought forward as an invincible champion in another hemisphere. I must leave the real worth of this modern theory of atonement to the judgment of the christian public. I may say this much, however, that the means of promoting conviction, upon which I trust most, are the same which succeeded with Andrew Fuller; "it was not so much his reasoning, however; as the passages of Scripture which he brought forward, which made so deep an impression on my mind."

the life of Abraham Booth, who was Mr. Fuller's great antagonist. The biographer, who sided with Mr. Booth, details the controversy; and, among other facts, states, that Gethsemane was written against Fuller; and, after a just compliment to the modesty of that author, whose name he mentions not, he says that, "Mr. Fuller never reaped any thing but defeat in his contests with the author of Gethsemane." But that I doubt.

CHAPTER XX.

TERMS EXPLAINED, MISTAKES CORRECTED, OBJECTIONS REMOVED —REPRESENTATION.—DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ATONEMENT.—ABSTRACT RIGHTEOUSNESS —CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTABLE, BECAUSE IT IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW.—THE MERIT OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS DOES NOT FLOW FROM THE DIGNITY OF HIS DIVINE PERSON IN ANY DEGREE, BUT SOLELY FROM ITS CONFORMITY TO THE LAW.—QUESTION REVIVED RESPECTING THE SCRIPTURAL USES OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

I CONSIDER that I have already sufficiently established those doctrines of christian faith, which it was my object to set forth in the present publication. In respect to evidence, I believe I have nothing more to add; I cannot see that there is any thing left either dark or doubtful; or that it is possible for me to do more for the truths discussed, than I have already done. But inasmuch as I do know the vexatious troubles which lie between the lovers of truth and their object; inasmuch as my heart is knit to the heart of that class of mankind, by ties indissolvable; as for them alone I live, and for them I dare to die; I think it proper, even at the certain expense of sacrificing tasteful symmetry and elegance, to close

my performance, with a miscellaneous chapter of WORDS. Aye! reader, a chapter of words, and nothing bigger. But, by some invisible agency, words sometimes become great things; they stand in our way, like invisible goblins, and we cannot get forward; our feet are tied fast, we know not by what; we feel as if some horrible spirit were infolding us in his cold horrific arms; and the terror is ten thousand-fold increased, because we cannot for our souls tell, what is, or what is not the cause. The sons of truth know what I mean; and they will go along with me cheerily, while I proceed to conjure down a few of these goblins.

In my former publication, "THE FIEND OF THE REFORMATION DETECTED," I gave the following sentiment a most prominent station; I put it in italic at the head of a section of the work: page 62, section vi. *"That the imputability of Christ's righteousness does not depend in any manner, nor in any degree, on his representative character."*

It was most intentionally, and with deliberate and well weighed intention, that I gave that prominent station to that sentiment so enunciated. I did wish to draw the eyes of the sons of truth to this subject. I did wish to draw all the fire of all the batteries upon this spot. I have gained my end. Three different writers, each differing with the others on points which to them seem important, have united in condemning the above sentiment as unsound and dangerous; some of the most consummate judges have said, why did you give that prominent enunciation of your opinion, while you could have maintained your cause without doing so; and I find that there exists a certain undefined difficulty among many

honest men and sound moral thinkers, respecting the correctness of the sentiment alluded to.

It was exactly that state of the public mind which I wished to produce; and I have succeeded to the utmost bounds of my wish. The time to unmistify the mystery is now come. My general view of this subject is as follows:

I do not recollect that the term, representative, representation, or the kindred words, are used in the THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES of the church of England, or in the WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH. Nothing so far as I know, can be found in the original reformers, which touches the speculation about the representative system of this present age. It was during the latter part of the last century, that the speculation respecting representative government, prevailed in the British isles; from thence the speculation was brought hither, and here it was brought to perfection. The whole American soul is modelled, and cast into the mould of representative government. No American can pass a day, or even make a speech of five minutes, without introducing the idea of representation. We have little juvenile philosophers, who are hardly able to put on their own pantaloons without help, who talk more precisely and correctly about representation, and representative government, than the first sages and foremost scholars of Europe could do thirty years ago. It is a fine speculation; still it is but a speculation. It is a noble effort of the generalising mind of man, to gain a vantage ground, from whence to speculate; from whence to act. Still it is a metaphysic, and nothing more. And by the true moral law of God's world, no metaphysic can destroy a fact.

It is notorious, and it ought to be well known, to all who regulate the moral order and concerns of human society; that the speculations of the state travel into the church; and that the speculations of the church, travel into the state; and that the terms which express those speculations become common property; a sort of semi-civil, semi-ecclesiastical vocabulary. All this is right enough. It must be, in this world which God made, and his Son commands. But let us take care, that words do not destroy things. Let us take conscientious care, that we do not attempt to turn truth out of the world, by means of technical phraseology. This is my object: And, therefore, I demand to be heard. I shall feel no reluctance to submit to the public judgment.

FIRST IDEA OF CHRIST'S REPRESENTATION.

The first application of the terms, that which has long been in use, and which is perhaps universal in the Calvinistic churches; views Christ's special relation to the elect, constituted by the eternal covenant between him and his Father. I can produce as many instances, as any reasonable man can desire, from the writings and ecclesiastical documents of modern Calvinists, to show that when they speak of Christ's representative character they mean that he represented the elect in the eternal covenant; and that his representation consists in his peculiar relation to the elect, established from eternity by the decree and covenant of God, a relation which secures them against dying in sin, under the wrath of God, and eventually secures their justification and eternal life. Such being the meaning of the word in the Calvinistic churches, for which particu-

larly I wrote, I was bound to use it in that meaning; for to change the meaning of a word, to call a point a line, and a line a point, and then to enter into dispute about the matter, is the meanest of all sophistries; and one of which I would be ashamed to be found guilty.

Using this common authorised sense of the term, I did assert that the imputability of Christ's righteousness does not depend on his representation: that is, that it does not depend on his peculiar relation to the elect. For I insist, that his righteousness is, in its own nature, capable of being imputed to every mortal man; and I offer this book to the public as a demonstration of that doctrine. I hope, therefore, that Calvinists will now declare themselves satisfied with my language. If they admit that Christ's righteousness is, in its nature, capable of being imputed to mankind in general, then they must grant that its imputability does not, "in any manner, or in any degree," depend on his special relation to the elect: if they insist that it is capable of being imputed only to the elect; then they ought to refute this publication, unless they have more important avocations. But as to myself, personally, they will cheerfully acknowledge, that I have acted a fair and honourable part, in the use which I have made of this term, and others of the same stock: I have used these words, in their current sense and signification.

SECOND IDEA OF CHRIST'S REPRESENTATION.

A young gentleman, of whom I shall only say, that he was premature in commencing author; for as he is gone to his long repose, I wish to pass his grave with that gentleness and humanity of feeling, with which I

wish those who shall survive me, to pass my own: but justice to truth requires that the ideas which he gave to the christian public, and which were the occasion of my former publication on this subject, should not be passed by in entire silence.

His idea was, *"that Christ ought to be called the* REPRESENTATIVE *of converted persons only; who being regenerated by the Spirit of God, and believing with a true and living faith in the Son of God, are justified from sin, and bound up in the bundle of life with Jesus the Mediator."* With respect to the ideas communicated in the above sentence, which I put in italic, not as a quotation, but for the sake of distinct consideration, I cheerfully say, that they are nothing more than the old, ascertained, sound, and universally admitted doctrines of the Calvinistic churches. For by them all it is admitted, nay, maintained, and strenuously defended, that till a sinner is regenerated he cannot believe, till he believes he is not justified; but that by regenerating grace, being enabled to exercise faith, he is justified before God, and becomes an heir of glory; and that there is then a new and peculiar relation constituted between his Redeemer and him, which has been called a vital union, and by other terms, all of which imply that there exists a relation between the Son of God and believers, distinct and different from the relation between him and the elect. So far this author neither added to, nor diminished from, the circulating stock of ascertained religious truth, time immemorial known, maintained, and cherished in the christian church.

The only thing new, is a new application of the word REPRESENTATION. It is universally admitted by Calvinists, that the relation between Christ and the

elect, and the relation between him and the believer, are two distinct and different relations: they had been long in the habit of using the word representation to designate the former of these relations; and our late author insisted, that the term should be employed to express the latter of them.

So far, the matter was merely a strife of words. But the shifting of the meaning of words, like the shifting of the monsoons, often excites storms and hurricanes, in which the most skilful commanders, in the stoutest vessels, are brought to their wit's end; while frail barks, under incompetent commanders, cannot hope to escape—at least tremendous loss and damage.

For my own part, it is a matter of indifference to me, where the word representation is placed, provided I can ascertain its meaning. If I had found it in common use, expressing the vital union between Jesus and believers, I should never have disturbed it from its place; and as I found it generally employed to express the relation between the Mediator and the elect, I left it as I found it, in quiet possession of its appropriated idea.

I would not think it worth while to inquire which of these two applications, bears the closest analogy to representative government among men; neither of them bears a perfect analogy to it; and the analogical application of the term representation, may answer the purpose of human speech in either case.

Nay, if I had found the word representation employed to express the general relation which exists between Jesus and the whole human family; had it been customary to call him the representative of the whole human race, because he, as Mediator, is engaged to work

out salvation for all; I should not have altered the meaning of the terms. Calvin calls Jesus the substitute of Adam in the Covenant; and if the moderns had pleased to give the name representative to the mediatorial substitute, as they have given it to Adam, the original covenant head, I should have used the phrase with all freedom.

But our author saw, that even if we should allow this new location to the word representation, it would go but a little way to promote the high objects which he had in view—which were these three; to assign a moral reason which should justify God in imputing Adam's sin to his posterity; a moral cause which should justify him in imputing Christ's righteousness to believers; and a moral cause which should justify him in offering salvation to all men—all these three reasons he professes to derive from the doctrine of representative government. The two first he has attempted, and has laboured to a great length; but completely failed in the issue: on the third, he has said nothing, nor was it possible to deduce any thing from his theory of representation, which could be brought to bear on the equity of the general call of the gospel. But, I am only concerned to justify myself for asserting, in a former publication, that representation is not the cause of the imputability of Christ's righteousness, on the new theory. That theory runs thus:

Adam represented the human race,

Because we all existed in him substantially, as the oak in the acorn, and are no more than Adam evolved; and, when we personally exist, we are con-

demned for Adam's sin, because we existed in him, as a part of sinning Adam.

This is the old theory, which I have discussed so amply in Chapter XIV. to which the reader is referred. When I read the new edition of the old theory; I deny, said I, that any man is thus substantially identified with Adam; and, therefore, I deny that it is the cause why Adam's sin falls upon his posterity; for that which does not exist, cannot, possibly, produce any effects.

Jesus represents believers,

According to the new system, because, by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, they are, actually, one with him; and no more than Christ evolved; and, in the same sense, a part of him who wrought the righteousness, as of him who committed the sin.

This is the old theory, which I have exposed, at large, in Chapter XV. to which the reader is referred. If this substantial identification with Christ, so that we are no more than Christ evolved, be what you mean by his representation; then, I deny the possibility of such representation, and, of course, deny all effects which may be ascribed to a nonentity.

Thus then I denied; and, now, after a long and deliberate review of the subject, do again audaciously deny, that the imputation of Christ's righteousness, depends on his representative character, in any sense ever yet assigned to the word representation. I shall dispose of this polysyllable, by and by, according to its merits.

In relation to a theory, which I shall now take leave of for ever, I shall only further add, that it

notoriously failed of gaining its avowed and grand object—a moral reason to justify God, in the general offer of life to sinners, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It considered the two covenants as distinct original institutions: hence, if the believer is saved by the institution, of which Christ is the head, he must leave the original institution unsatisfied; in becoming a subject of the second institution, he ceases to be, in any way, a subject to the first. The covenant of works is degraded, and abolished, and dishonoured; and, so far as it is concerned, the divine glory sustains an indellible blot.

Besides this idea of two distinct moral institutions, is manifestly repugnant to the preaching of the gospel among sinners. It is easy to say, that God has authorised sinners to remove from under the covenant of works, and place themselves under the representation of Christ, in the covenant of grace. But, what does the speech mean? Does it mean, that Jehovah authorises sinners to withdraw from under the covenant of works which they have violated, without any satisfaction to his justice for their rebellion, without liquidating every claim and demand which it has against them? This must be the case, if the new covenant be a distinct institution from the old. It would seem, that sinners are under one moral system, of which the covenant of works is the law, and Jehovah the Father, the Sovereign: and, that believers are under another moral system, of which the covenant of grace is the law, and Immanuel the Sovereign. There are, then, two moral systems, under two moral heads, among one race of subjects living together, in the same world, and connected together by a thousand ties of moral obligations.

But it would seem, that one of these Sovereigns has no objection, that his subjects should decline his jurisdiction, and leaving his law broken, and his authority degraded, should go over to the dominions of the other, and place themselves under his jurisdiction. Admit this, and the NECESSITY or POSSIBILITY of ATONEMENT must be denied.

But for the reasons mentioned at the beginning of the present article, I forbear to pursue the subject any farther; and have blotted out much that I had written in my first draught of this publication. Of the theory we shall, probably, never hear any more; and the only reason for introducing these few remarks upon it, is to show, that I was correct, in asserting, that Christ's righteousness is not imputable to sinners, in consequence of his representation, using that term in any sense, in which it has ever yet been used. And now, I have a question to propose and discuss:

What should we do with the term Representation, in this question?

Reader, you and I have as good a right to inhabit the earth, as other men have; as good a right to use the Scriptures, which God has given us for our instruction in the doctrine of salvation, as any men can have; and a perfect right to reject the theories, and technical terms, which men may wish to force upon us; and we may use this right, without assigning any other reason, than that such terms and theories are not in the Bible. I, accordingly, for my own part, reject this theological term REPRESENTATION, and all the theories of religion connected with it. And, though I do not think myself bound, formally, to assign my reasons for this exercise of my just right, yet, for the sake of others, I shall do so.

1. This term, (with its kindred terms,) is not found in the Scriptures; we can, therefore, investigate divine truth, as well, perhaps better, without it, than with it.

2. It is used in different senses, and is, therefore, calculated to mislead.

3. It is used sometimes to express what is not true, and, therefore, must be injurious.

4. It aspires to the honour of suggesting a theory of the christian religion, which yet it does not, and cannot perform.

I, therefore, shall cast it to that pile of rejected terms of technical theology, to which I have been adding for more than twenty years; and, to which I suppose I shall continue adding as long as I live.

If any reader should suppose, that this rejection of the term in question is injudicious, or is prompted by a desire to extricate myself from any logical difficulties, in which he may suppose me to be involved; since a blunt denial might not be accepted as satisfactory, I beg leave to give an exhibition of the subject capable of satisfying any man, worthy of demanding satisfaction.

Consider the glory of the mediatorial Son of God. Consider that the infinite Spirit of God, in speaking of this personage, has laid the known universe under contribution, that each part may throw a ray of analogical light upon him, to render his glory prominent in the eyes of mankind. Consider that after all creation has paid its contributions, to illustrate the glory of our Redeemer, we are then informed, that but a small part of his glory has been displayed; and that all these illuminations are in fact only the hidings of his glory.

What is the mediatorial Son of God like! what, rather, of the great, of the good, of the glorious, in creation is he not like! while his greatness, goodness, and glory, bear to those of all creation no more ratio, than infinite bears to finity. Look to the heavens above you, Jesus is the bright and morning star; more—he is the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings, and pouring light, life, joy over the world. Look to the earth created for your accommodation, he is the fountain of living waters, flowing in the wilderness to refresh and save your soul; he is the bread of life, that came down from heaven to save you; look to the most splendid works of man, Jesus is the foundation and chief corner stone in God's temple of mercy. Behold your vegetable productions, Jesus, for beauty, is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the vallies; he is the apple tree among the trees of the wood, for delightful esculent productions; and the vine for enlivening exhilirating beverage. The animals pay their tribute of analogical illustration, to this their second but most glorious Adam: In kindness and in care, Jesus is like the parent hen, spreading her wings to shelter and cherish her helpless chirping brood: and in danger, he is the lion who roars defiance at all his and your enemies. Come into your families, and Jesus is your elder brother, who redeems your inheritance, who stands by you in all dangers, and dies on the enemies' spear that you may live. Talk ye of love, he is the husband of his church, who loves her as his own flesh and blood, and life and soul. Look to the sacred rites and offices of religion, Jesus is your prophet to declare the will of God to you; at the altar he is

your priest, offering his own soul as your burnt offering; at the throne of offended majesty, he is your intercessor and your advocate; in respect to your earthly management, he is the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Look up to your civil organization, and learn from its wise construction, and beneficial results, the glory of your Redeemer; he is your chief executive officer, your king or sovereign, or president, if you will; he is your sole, all wise, and disinterested legislator; look to your tribunals, Jesus is your judge, the supreme judge from whom lies no appeal. Does war invade you? He is the captain of your salvation. Are you sick? he is your physician. Are you dead and laid in the dark cold lonesome grave; he is the resurrection and the life.

My God! when I consider the immense, and boundless extent of analogical allusions, and figurative illustrations, which the divine Spirit employs in the Holy Scriptures, to afford man, this tenant of a house of clay, a conception, or rather an impression, of the glory, the goodness, the endlessly varied offices, kindness, and bounty, of the Son of God our Redeemer and Saviour—what can I think of theories which would attempt to bound the glories of his mediation within the limits of any single metaphor!

I know that representative government is at present, and particularly among ourselves, an object of great interest, and great admiration, and still greater panegyric. It is admitted that between Jesus Christ and the human family, between him and the elect, between him and the converted, there are moral relations, which may be illustrated by a reference to representative government. I will venture to add that there never will be a moral organization of

human society, which shall not afford an analogy to some relation of the Son of God to some part of the human race. When the world was under kingly government, Jesus was called a king; and the writer of this, who had a republican tendency of thought, from the first moment he began to think, has been often pressed by monarchists with this argument—Jesus Christ is called a king repeatedly in Scriptures, therefore kingly government is that which is approved by heaven!—*Risum teneatis amici*—for indeed I could not restrain my risible muscles, when I heard this sage argument. And even now, after age has considerably checked risibility, by impairing the contractility of the muscles, I cannot help but smile a little at the man, who undertakes to prove, that Jesus Christ bears the same relation to any part of the human family, which our president does to the United States. I must be indulged in considering such a man, as possessed of little of the fancy of a poet, and still less of the severe intellect of a philosopher. Here closes this article.

OF THE TERMS DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ATONEMENT.

In my former publication I made some severe remarks against the doctrine of indefinite atonement; but I find by the animadversion of a gentleman much better acquainted, than I pretend to be, with the technical terms of theology in use among us; that my own idea of atonement falls precisely under the notion of indefinite atonement. If this be the case, I must have affixed an idea to the word *indefinite*, different from what it bears among modern theo-

logians: and it is my duty to explain myself, that I may not in any measure contribute to the protraction of verbal disputes.

I had formed an idea, whether from reading books, or hearing sermons, or conversation, I will not now be positive: but I had formed an idea, that by indefinite atonement, is meant, an atonement which bears no definite relation to the divine law given to the human race, nor any definite relation to the salvation of sinners under that law. Such was the idea I then attached to indefinite atonement; and I still think I did not speak much amiss, when I said of such a system, "that it is built up without the expense of a single idea, good or bad." And I have, at this moment, a strong impression on my mind, that this idea of indefinite atonement prevails among some theologians in our country to this day.

But I find that there is another idea, which obtains a large currency among other theologians in this country, belonging to several of the sections, into which the Calvinistic church is so mournfully divided. I find that in their vocabulary, a *definite* atonement means an atonement of definite value to save the elect; but possessing no value whatever, capable of saving any one else: and that *indefinite* atonement means an atonement not limited in its value to the number of the elect, but of such value as to be capable of saving all mankind. In this sense of the term, I certainly am an *indefinite atonement* man; and if the idea be absurd, the present volume is the most absurd of all the volumes published during the last hundred years; which is saying about as much as need be said on the subject.

I consider myself therefore as called upon to test the value of these two technical epithets, and that for three reasons. 1. I have, it seems, subjected myself to censure, by employing these equivocal words. 2. I have more than once, heard more than one minister of the gospel, declaiming from the pulpit against indefinite atonement, in terms which made on my mind a strong impression, that they were not aware of the ground they were treading on. 3. I have frequently in private conversation listened to honest well-meaning christians, speaking against indefinite, and in favour of definite atonement, in a way which convinced me that there is a mist around these epithets, dangerous to common christians, however well instructed they may be in the christian faith. Let us, therefore, examine into the meaning of these words.—I say into the meaning of the words, for it is nothing more than a grammatical inquiry into the different meanings of two equivocal words.

1. My own idea of the phrase definite atonement, wherever I may have used that phrase, is this. 1. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is defined, or bounded, and limited, by the law of works in its violated state, under which the Son of God was subject to it: it is, therefore, the definite righteousness of the law, or a definite atonement; because it definitely furnishes all that the law required, whether in respect to obedience or suffering. 2. The applicability of that righteousness, is defined, bounded, and limited by the number of the human family, or by the number of the subjects of that law: For whatsoever thing the law saith, it saith to all who are under it; this righteousness, therefore, is definitely capable of saving all who are under the law of works. 3. In respect to the number

to whom it eventually belongs, it is defined, bounded, and limited by the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son; as Jesus saith, "all that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me, and he that cometh, I will in no ways cast out." 4. Its actual application is defined, bounded, and limited by faith: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Thus the nature of the atonement is defined by the law; its applicability is defined by the number of the human race; its eventual application is defined by the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son; and its actual application is defined by the believer's faith. With these views, I should think myself perfectly justified in calling it a definite atonement; but I do not ask any one to adopt the word under my definition of it. I hope to show you a more excellent way.

But the word definite, receives a different meaning among some very respectable theologians; by definite atonement, they mean an atonement defined, bounded, and limited, by the amount of guilt imputable to the elect, and therefore in its own nature capable of saving only them, but equally incapable of saving any other of the human race. This is an idea against which I have fought with all my might. But my present purpose is merely to ascertain the different meanings affixed to this word: and I have fairly proved that it is an EQUIVOCAL WORD, and liable to all the objections under which that class of vocables labour.

2. The word indefinite I have found applied to the atonement, by some of the soundest Calvinistic divines; who speak of an indefinite atonement, made by the Son of God for all men; by which they meant

that the atonement is in its own nature, indefinitely, or indifferently, or equally, capable of saving all mankind. I think, that if I had phlegm or leisure enough, I could hunt up some of the authorities; but I have no motive to submit to the toil, as I have no benefit to gain from it. In this sense of the word, I should have no objection to the phrase indefinite atonement, meaning thereby an atonement capable of saving all men without distinction. But the word in this sense is obsolete, it is not current in this meaning among modern divines; and I am too little a friend to technical terms in religion, to recommend the revival of the word in its old acceptation.

3. I once believed, and still suspect, that indefinite atonement has been used to represent an atonement bearing no definite reference to the broken law of works, or to the salvation of sinners under it. If this supposition be correct, the word indefinite also is EQUIVOCAL; and treats its meaning, as a vagabond treats his name, changing it according to the company he falls in with.

Thus these two epithets DEFINITE and INDEFINITE, as applied to atonement, being both equivocal words, and rendered doubly equivocal, because of their contrast, are equally dangerous instruments of thought and of communication. I propose that they be rejected from the theological vocabulary, a proposal the more reasonable, because neither of them are found in the Scriptures, nor any thing that can be translated by them, nor any thing that they can explain. Why should not men of sense, men of learning, and indisputable lovers of gospel truth, mutually agree to throw away equivocal words, which are the apple of discord, and the bone of contention, among them; for

about words only, in my opinion, can such men disagree; why should they not throw them away! Clearing away the rubbish of equivocal words, what have they on the present subject to dispute about. I assert, and I insist, that I have demonstrated, that the atonement of the Son of God is capable of saving all men; that on this comprehensive nature of its merit, it is to be preached to all men; that the believer is saved by it, because it is worthy to save him; and that the unbeliever is damned, because he rejects that which would have saved him, had he accepted it. Dost thou believe all this, reader, then why dispute about a couple of equivocal polysyllables! It would be unworthy boyish litigation in a disputing club; it is absolutely degrading to gray hairs, and bald crowns, to keep up a litigation, by playing off, equivocal verbage.

I for one, reject these *voces signatæ*, these technical words, definite and indefinite, as applied to the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those whom my arguments have convinced will reject them of course: and if ever in my life I had exercised authority over mature intellect, and if I were not restrained from the attempt by moral principles to me most sacred, I should enjoin it upon all over whom I could claim any influence, to reject these equivocal, treacherous words, from all their sermons. They are doing tremendous injury in America at this moment.

Young men, give ear! It is impossible that you should be aware of the danger connected with technical words in the sciences of mind, and theology. Allow me to give you one well known instance. Could you imagine that the four letters i, d, e, a, should have thrown all Christendom into a blaze, should have

offered up whole hecatombs of human beings to the Moloch of metaphysics, should have ingrossed the brightest geniuses of the christian church for centuries, should have conducted the ablest thinkers of the age immediately past, to nothing else than blank atheism. Nothing is more certain than the fact. I shall just touch the outlines of the history of this instructive event, from memory, and without pretending to minute accuracy.

Plato had entertained a notion, probably derived from tradition rather than invention, that the objects of the mind's comtemplation are not things themselves, but certain somethings, which he called the ideas of things. According to him, an idea is not any natural object, such as a house, a tree, or a man; but a certain something, resembling it, and this idea is the immediate object of the mind's perception. The idea was neither the object, nor the mind, nor yet the mind's perception, but something (I know not what) between the object and the mind. I refer you to your church history, for the war between the nominalists and realists, in which so much human ingenuity was for ages thrown away, so much ink expended, and alas! so much human blood, and more shocking still, so much christian blood was shed on both sides, as the parties alternately prevailed in securing the aid of the secular arm. Let us pass this by; they lived, say you, in a barbarous age; well! let us come to an age not barbarous.

Des Cartes introduced the speculation of the Platonic ideas into modern philosophy. John Locke took up the subject, and reasoned it out, perhaps more coolly and at large than a Frenchman could. Bishop Berkley took up the subject, where Locke had left it, and by the correctest logic, argued the material world

out of existence. David Hume took it up, where Berkley left it, and fairly argued the spiritual world out of existence. Thus among them all, they left us neither matter nor mind in the universe! All was ignorance, all was scepticism, all was atheism! But who would question the talents, the literature, or the labour, of the men engaged in this unfortunate speculation? In fine it required no less than the talents and sound good sense, of such a man as Dr. Reid, exercised under the most favourable circumstances, through a long life, to rid the world of the word IDEA. For the sake of the unlearned I add, that the word idea has, through the means of false philosophy become naturalized in our language; but we have dropped the Platonic figment, and the word idea means nothing more among us, than a notion, or conception of a thing.

Ex uno disce omnes—ex ungue leonem. Such are technical terms in the philosophy of the human mind, and in the systematic theology of the christian churches, in all ages down to that in which we live.

Do not, my young friends, be scared out of your wits by any of these technical terms, and phrases of mystery. The moment they appear, hail them—challenge them. Who are you?—Whence do you come?—Whither are you going?—What are you about? What do you mean? If they do not give prompt satisfaction, fire on them! I am done with this subject.

ABSTRACT RIGHTEOUSNESS.

It has been written, that I have suffered myself to be led astray by the idea of an abstract righteousness. It would seem, from the charge, that the idea of an abstract righteousness is erroneous. I do not know

whether I do, or do not, entertain such a notion; I am pretty certain I never did make use of the phrase; because I am absolutely sure, I do not know what it means. The term abstract righteousness, is probably a *vox signata*, a technical phrase among some speculators. I really know nothing about it.

But when the charge was made against me, I tried my thoughts upon the subject, ωσπερ εικος ην, and this was the result. It appears to me that the idea of righteousness is one of those, which we at present call abstract ideas. Righteousness is neither matter, nor mind, nor any conceivable substance. Yet we have the idea of it, and it is from actual substances, from moral beings, that we acquire the idea. According to the present vocabulary of our language, I should think it proper to call righteousness an abstract term, and the idea which it represents an abstract idea.

Yet I refuse to call an actual righteousness, by the name of an abstract righteousness. But without disputing about words, my idea of Christ's righteousness is this. It is the righteousness of an actual moral agent; it is the righteousness exacted by an actual moral law; it was a righteousness composed of actual moral virtues, love to God, love to man; piety and morality in all their forms, according to all the moral relations of the agent: it was a righteousness which included voluntary and excruciating pains of body and mind, hunger, poverty, mental terrour, bodily torture and death, inflicted by the justice of an angry but just God. Whether this can be called an abstract righteousness, or not, I cannot say, till I know what an abstract righteousness means. But of this I am sure, that the righteousness of Jesus under the law is no more abstract, than the righteousness of Jehovah in

governing his world; no more abstract than the righteousness of the angels in obeying their law; no more abstract than the righteousness of Adam, so long as he stood in integrity; no more abstract than the righteousness of the saints in the judgment day.

If writers on theology, will only take the trouble to understand each other, an immense mass of polemical rubbish, may be swept away; and an accelerating approximation may be made in the church of God, towards unity in doctrine, and harmony in intercourse. But, unless we get rid of the mysterious wisdom of words, and make the happy discovery, that "a rose, by any other name, will smell as sweet," reformation and improvement are impossible; and, we must continue in our present pitiful employment—talking words at each other.

Christ's righteousness imputable, because it is the righteousness of the law.

In the Fiend of the Reformation Detected, I asserted, that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputable to all men, because it is the righteousness of the law, under which all men are placed; which law includes the representative principle; so that, as Adam's sin condemns all, the mediatorial righteousness of Jesus is capable of saving all. The idea that our Lord's righteousness is imputable, because it is the righteousness of the law, was so clear and familiar to my own mind, that I did not conjecture, that it would call forth either praise or censure from any man. The event, however, has fallen out otherwise: one writer has treated the notion as a ridiculous absurdity, while another gives me great praise for

inventing so ingenious a fiction; the truth is, it is no absurdity at all, and still less an invention of mine: it was in the following passage of Scripture I found it.

Matt. xix. 16—26. "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible: but with God all things are possible."

When engaged in studying this passage many years ago, I was struck with a certain indescribable awe. The teacher of all righteousness, certainly knows how to preach his own gospel; and he certainly does preach

salvation by human righteousness, by the works of the the law, provided man will produce that righteousness which the law requires: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The reason why men cannot be saved by a human righteousness, is, not that a human righteousness would be insufficient to procure their justification before God; but, that they are unable to produce that righteousness.

Mark then, reader! The Scriptures mention no less than three righteousnesses, which lead to eternal life: 1. Adam's righteousness, if it had been completed, would have justified his posterity. 2. Our own righteousness, if we could produce it, would justify each one of us. 3. The righteousness of Christ, by faith, justifies every believer. This is plain, visible, palpable, Scripture doctrine; plain, irrefutable, undeniable matter of fact: it stands in no need of any man's ingenuity to defend it; and, it defies the ingenuity of all men to refute it.

Are there, then, three ways to heaven! No, there is but one way, the high way, originally laid out by our Creator, and never altered, the way of the law of works. Adam's righteousness would have justified us, because it would have been the righteousness of the law; man's own righteousness would justify him, if he could produce it, because it would be the righteousness of the law; and Christ's righteousness actually does justify the believer, because it is the righteousness of the law. And, indeed, no idea is to me more simple, than, that if a man produces the righteousness of the law, at the tribunal of justice, he must be justified, for this single reason, and for no other, that he gives the law all that the law demands. Wherein, I pray you, lie the sin and folly of men's seeking

salvation, by their own works? Here, and only here, lies the sin, and lies the folly, namely, that they who are transgressors of the law, should seek to be justified thereby! As if the murderer should produce his bloody dagger at the tribunal, and urge his guilt, as the plea for his acquittal!

Does Christ's righteousness derive any of its worth or merit from the dignity of his divine person?

I have observed, that an affirmative answer has been given to this question, by some of the ancients. And, I perceive, that some modern authors give it a similar answer; and use that answer, in a very unguarded and incautious way; making it the basis to support doctrines of the most awful import, which ought to stand on their own foundation; which ought to be proved by direct Scripture, and never made an inference from any speculation. It is an apprehension, that the speculations growing out of the above question, are about to work some mischief, which induces me to expend a few thoughts upon it. I think I see a cockatrice, putting his head out of his shell, and, with the specific instinct of his nature, aiming a bite, before his fangs are grown, or his poison concocted; and, therefore, I judge that it may be best to tread on him now, and not to wait till he shall have done some eminent mischief.

The idea that the righteousness of Christ, derives a great merit from his divine nature and character, has a most imposing aspect: it seems to confer glory upon him; and to impart ineffable assurance, and a sort of tranquil triumph to the faith of the saints. The days were when I held such language myself;

and therefore I have no right to censure those who still use it; accordingly, I censure them not. But that the opinion is unscriptural; that it obscures, instead of illustrating the grace of God; that it confers no glory on Christ, but the contrary; and that the assurance and consolations of faith, are placed by God on other, and surer ground, I have long and firmly believed; for reasons which I shall now respectfully submit to my reader's consideration.

1. In the first place the idea that Christ's righteousness derives any merit from the divinity of his person, is contrary to the Scriptures.

Philipp. ii. 5—8. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion like a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."

In these scriptures we are told that our Redeemer was "in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" but "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant:" that "he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor."

The question then is, what was the riches, which Christ laid down, when he became poor? What was the glory of which, when found in the form

of God, and counting it no robbery to be equal with God (εαυτον εκενωσε) he *emptied* himself?

It could not be his divine nature—for that is impossible, and in every view absurd.

It could not be any perfection of his divinity—for that too is absurd and impossible, because all the divine perfections inhere in the divine nature, and are bound together by immutable necessity.

It was not the sovereignty of the universe that he laid down—For when God brought his first born into the world he said: "Let all the angels worship him." The winds and the seas obeyed him, and universal nature was under his controul.

What then was it, of which he emptied himself? What was the riches which he laid down when he became a servant in human nature?

Precisely his PERSONAL DIGNITY—His dignity as a person subject to no law. Being God, and accounting it no robbery to be equal with God, he was the essential fountain of all moral excellence, the origin of all law, and of all authority; the laws, which he had made for his creatures, could never bind him. But says the apostle he emptied himself of his dignity; he voluntarily put himself under the law, he became a servant, he acknowledged a superior, and became subject to his authority. This is the apostle's plain doctrine, it is impossible to mistake it. Had our Redeemer plead his personal dignity as a divine person, the law never could have commanded him. But when he stripped himself of his dignity, and made himself a servant of the law, what should the law know of a dignity, which he had laid down! So soon as the law found him its subject, it said to him, what it says to us all, pay

me what thou owest. Law knows nothing of dignity; it is its nature to be just; it demands its due; it asks no more, it accepts no less. In strict propriety of thought, all the dignity lies in the law, its servants have nothing left but humble subjection and obedience. I conclude, therefore, that if the Son of God emptied himself of his personal dignity, when he became subject to the divine law, that personal dignity can add no worth or merit to his righteousness.

2. The idea that the dignity of our Lord's person, should add any thing to the merit of his work, is absolutely inconceivable. Sounds of this sort, though manufactured into grammatical propositions, express no ideas whatever. What do you mean by our Lord's personal dignity adding merit to his righteousness? Is not the law itself the alone and only standard of merit? I have proved already from the preaching of the Son of God himself, that the law would be as well satisfied with the righteousness of man himself, were it produced; as it is with his mediatorial righteousness. Does the law command more than it commands? or does it promise, as reward, more than it promises? And can it recognise any thing beyond its own requisitions? Such things are impossibilities.

3. The supposition that our Lord's divine character, adds any thing to the merit of his work, appears to me (I confess it) dishonourable to him. He is not the Gaul, who throws his sword into the scale, and insists that his dignity shall pass for merit. He undertook a work, and he goes through with it, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," saith he: and when humanity, pure as it was, and even in his person, shuddered at the approaching agony, he said no

more than "Father, if it be possible suffer this cup to pass from me"—and instantly adds, "nevertheless let not my will, but thy will be done." I deny that our Lord ever shrunk from any requirement of the law, ever plead his dignity as merit, ever demanded more than was justly due by the law, for his obedience to it. I could place this subject in other lights; but I dare not indulge levity on this theme. It is absolutely ridiculous, to suppose that the righteousness of Christ has any other worth, merit, or value, than what it derives from the law. Could the president of the United States pass off a dollar for more than one hundred cents? No. I can pass it off for that much myself. Why? Because the law has determined that such, and no less, and no more, should be its value.

4. If it were possible, that the dignity of Christ's person, should amalgamate itself with the merit of his righteousness, that dignity never could become mine, and of consequence, is no part of his imputable righteousness. The law never required me, to be a divine person; and never will condemn me, for not being a divine person: If, by faith, I obtain righteousness, I am pardoned and justified as a man; I present to the law a satisfaction for what a man owed to that law. That's all!

Here again I meet thy face, thou blessed of God and man, heavenly truth! Once more it comes up that Christ's righteousness can save us, because it is the righteousness of the law. And whoever can assign a better reason, or any other reason, why I should be justified by the law of my race; than this, that I present the righteousness of that law at the tribunal of justice, may assign it—*Et eris mihi magnus Apollo!*

I hope I have some just impression of the dignity of our Redeemer; I believe him to be the Lord God Jehovah, who created me; and the Jehovah Jesus, the Lord God in human nature, who redeemed me. I adore his love and condescension in becoming man, and a servant to the law of human nature, in order to redeem the sons of men. I glorify God for devising this plan of salvation, and for accepting the righteousness of his Son embraced by faith, in lieu of a human righteousness. But I insist that that righteousness is the very righteousness of the law, and that God is just while he justifies the sinner who believes; and that having devised this plan, and brought the real righteousness of his law into the world, and offered it to mankind without exception, he would not be just were he to reject that righteousness when plead by faith at his tribunal.

USE OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

In my former publication, THE FIEND OF THE REFORMATION DETECTED, I asked this question: "What is precisely the use which the sacred writers make of the doctrine of election?" I had my reasons for proposing that inquiry in the most pointed manner. Among those who have noticed that publication (and I have seen no less than three publications by different authors, in all of which it has been censured,) not one has paid the slightest attention to that question, so purposely, and so emphatically propounded. I am left to conjecture the causes of this neglect. But that such neglect may not be persevered in, and that the question may receive at least some part of the attention, to which it is entitled, I shall mention the

reasons which induces me to propose it. A number of modern theologians, who call themselves Calvinists, never derived their doctrine of election from the Bible! It is with them a mere element in a metaphysical theory! We are morally certain of this; for if they had derived the doctrine of election immediately from the Bible, they would, of course, have brought along with it, some of the uses and ends, for which it is brought forward by the sacred writers. But now they make a use of the doctrine which is unknown to the sacred writers.—They make election the measure of the value and imputability of Christ's righteousness—a use which I assert is never once made of it, in the Bible, from one end to the other! I, therefore, revive my unsolved problem, and again I ask: "What is precisely the use which the sacred writers make of the doctrine of election?" In the name of truth, I ask an answer to this question; and I ask the production of, at least, some of the texts, with their analysis.

This is not the language of haughty defiance, or of indecent importunity. It is the language which one who professes himself devoted to the truth, ought to use to those who make the same profession. We are witnesses for Christ; and as true witnesses, we are bound to answer every fair question; and every question is fair, which tends to elicit the truth.

But I have been too long in the region of abstract thought. We must stop somewhere. I accordingly close this chapter, voluntarily throwing away many other curious questions, and strifes of words, which I had intended to have discussed under this head. I am sorry to find, that when men are investigating divine truth, instead of meeting the difficulty which

stares them in the face, each springs from the direct path, and starts one and another difficulty, which leads them all away from the main subject. The spirit of discord, throws her golden apples hither and yonder, and while, like Atalanta, we are pursuing them, and striving to gather up all, the race is lost. I am afraid, that the judicious will think that I have paid too much attention to some little speculations, which might safely have been left to "waste their fragrance on the desert air." I am somewhat of the same opinion myself; and shall therefore conclude this miscellaneous chapter.

CONCLUSION.

But it is necessary to come to a conclusion; every subject branches and spreads itself out into infinity; the hydra heads of error are never all to be lopped, nor the multifarious riches and resources of truth to be explored, or expounded by man. It is the main design and end of a work, which ought always to regulate and bound the extent of our discussions and illustrations. And although I have rejected many things, and greatly curtailed others, I am still under an apprehension, that my reader may wish I had used the pruning knife more liberally. I think I have said enough to afford the christian reader, and especially the young theologian, sufficient means of judging whether my views of the gospel of Jesus be correct or otherwise: if he decides in my favour, he may pursue my principles and methods of investigation, into those branches of the subject which I have omitted; if he pronounces me wrong, he will easily excuse my omissions; and covering with the cloak of charity, on account of good intention, what I have published, will thank me for suppressing the rest.

My view was to exhibit the Son of God in human nature, as the Mediator between God and the human race, and in his mediatorial character, the moral Sovereign of the universe; God having appointed him to

be head over all things to his body the church. I have endeavoured to shew, that in the state of his humiliation, he made, by his obedience and death, a satisfaction to the law and justice of God, capable of saving all mankind; and that God fully testified his acceptance of the satisfaction of his Son, as competent to this end, by raising him from the dead; and set him at his own right hand, in the place of supreme power, and supreme glory. That in consequence of this plenitude of his satisfaction, and the consequent universality of his dominion, Jesus has directed his heralds to preach his gospel to every creature; inviting, and commanding, all men to believe in him and be saved. That it is a most undoubted, holy, and salutary truth, that he is both able and willing to save every human creature; that his ministers can, and ought, most infallibly to assure them all, that there is remission of sins for them in the blood of Jesus; and that nothing is wanting but faith on their part, to secure them pardon and eternal life. In exhibiting this view of the Mediatorial Reign of the Son of God, under which all mankind are placed, I selected the universal call and command of Jesus Christ to all sinners, to believe in him for salvation, as the central point of the christian revelation, where man receives the first light and discovery of evangelical truth, and from whence alone he can survey the whole extent of the christian system.

In establishing these grand fundamental truths of christianity, I have depended exclusively on one single process of demonstration, namely, the direct testimony of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures; which testimony has been made manifest by the production of abundantly, and superabundantly numerous passages of

holy writ, all holding the same language in terms so clear, so definite, and so energetic, that it is impossible to mistake or to misinterpret their meaning. By this species of proof, and by this alone, I have sought to establish every doctrine of the christian faith, purposely brought forward in this treatise for discussion. Doctrine taught in this way, I call christian doctrine; for it is taught by the Spirit of God speaking in the Scriptures: such doctrine so demonstrated, can be, and ought to be, received with a divine faith; for its evidence is, *Thus saith the Lord.* Doctrines so revealed fall under what I call christianity, and the faith of him who believes them, stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the wisdom of God.

In this treatise I have sometimes been constrained, by the necessity of the argument, to engage in discussions which belong to what I call the *philosophy of christianity.* Under this name I include two classes of speculations; in the one, different parts of divine truth are compared together, in order to ascertain their moral relations, ratios, and proportions; the fullest discussion of this sort, which occurs in the present volume, will be found in the comparison, instituted between the original law of works made with Adam, and the remedial administration of the same law under Jesus Christ. The second class of speculations, which I arrange under the head of the philosophy of christianity, are those which trace the analogies between the religion revealed to man in the Bible, and his constitution, condition, circumstances, and prospects upon this earth. Several speculations of this sort, will be found in the present work.

In respect to this philosophy of christianity, a few observations may not be out of place here. There can

be no doubt that it is a legitimate object of human study. Every mature christian knows something about it, just as every man knows something of natural philosophy; but to make any considerable advances in this species of knowledge, requires a mind highly cultivated, and richly stored with all sorts of knowledge, human and divine. I apprehend that it is dangerous, or at least unprofitable, to deal largely in such speculations from the pulpit: the reason is obvious, the multitude are incapable of going along with the preacher; they are in danger of getting entangled in difficulties; they are almost certain of being impressed with the opinion, that christianity is a mysterious thing, which it is not; and at all events their time is thrown away, which ought to have been occupied to edification.

But as such speculations will sometimes be introduced into pulpits, and on some rare occasions ought to be indulged, I hope I may be permitted to offer my opinion on the proper method of managing them. Observation teaches us, that there are two methods, of very unequal merit.

1. Some preachers commence their discourse with the establishment of the abstract doctrine, and spend perhaps a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, in acute ingenious reasonings on that subject, and then close by quoting a few texts to prove, that their speculations have a scriptural foundation. The consequence is, that during the first part of the discourse the people are lost, bewildered, and doubtful; during the second part, they are, perhaps, full of admiration of the man; but then probably they think, that he discovered his philosophy without the Bible; and then again, perhaps they may experience some wanderings of the mind, as that if men were only philosophers they might do tolerably

well without the Bible. I consider this a bad plan of discussing such subjects; besides it smells a little of pulpit vanity, the worst of all vanities.

2. The proper method of introducing such subjects, (if they are to be introduced at all) is to begin by establishing your doctrines by direct Scripture proof, which proof ought always to be abundant; and then you may trace the analogies of the truths so demonstrated; or the analogy between them and the moral condition of the inhabitants of our world. One rule is imperative, enter no farther into such speculations than the mass of the audience can go along with you; it is as bad, as to preach in an unknown tongue, and in some respects worse. In fine, only a few should dip into such subjects, and those few should do it seldom. No technical rule can be given; wisdom is necessary to direct.

A third species of speculations of which numerous samples will be found in this work, belongs to what, for want of another name, I call the METAPHYSICS OF CHRISTIANITY. I wish it to be understood, that I have not introduced (so far as I know) any speculation of this sort on my own account, in order to establish it as doctrine, or to allow it to have any the least weight in supporting the principles of christianity which I advocate. These metaphysics occur in the systems, which I labour to overturn. I introduce these metaphysics only to destroy them. A few examples will explain what I mean by the metaphysics of Christianity. Such questions as the following belong to this department. How does Adam's sin descend to his posterity?—Is guilt the cause of corruption, or corruption the cause of guilt?—What is the abstract nature of atonement?—How can God

be sovereign, and man free? how can man be free and God sovereign?—What is the prime element of virtue? These may serve as a sample; such questions swarm all over the writings of systematic and especially polemic theologians; their number is countless. They resemble much the ontological speculations of some of the Greek metaphysicians; and the disputes about the nature and possibility of motion, among some Greek philosophers. To the metaphysics of christianity, I refer all theological questions, which admit of no solution, or which if solved would lead to no valuable practical results; and which therefore produce no other effect, that to trouble the brain, vex the conscience, and tempt to skepticism. These are the questions which I treat so cavalierly; perhaps some of my readers may think that they are handled with unreasonable and excessive severity. I have but this simple apology to make; my contempt and indignation, are so equally balanced in regard to such speculations, that I do not know whether I scorn or detest them most.

For the sake of those, to whom I have dedicated this work, I mention these things here, rather than at the commencement. After having read the book, they will be better able to form an estimate of the justness and value of the distinction, which has been made between CHRISTIANITY—THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIANITY—and the METAPHYSICS OF CHRISTIANITY; than they would have been, had these distinctions been formally pressed upon them at the beginning. If the distinction be as real, as I take it to be, between these subjects; and if it possess but half the importance, which I assign it; an excellent practical rule will result, to regulate equally the studies, as

the ministrations, of those who are commencing their career as preachers of the gospel. They will see that it is the gospel itself, christianity as it is taught in the Bible, which they are commissioned to preach to perishing men for their salvation; and that the more simply they preach it, and the more amply they support it by direct Scripture quotations; the more are they in the line of their duty, and the more likely are they to be blessed in turning many sinners unto righteousness, and in building up saints in their holy faith. The philosophy of christianity, they are under no imperative obligation to study; but if they should study it, they ought to be very cautious what use they make of it in the pulpit: neither the mass of mankind, nor the body of the christian church, were made to be philosophers; and there would appear to be something mean in figuring away on topics, which an audience cannot comprehend; were it not that so small a consideration, is swallowed up in the enormous guilt of trifling with the souls of men. But above all, the metaphysics of christianity, is good for nothing, and bad for every thing that is good. And happy will the writer of this work call himself, if he should be made the instrument of rescuing even one single young man, from the heart-rending vexations, which these fruitless speculations produce. Here then I bid my young friends an affectionate adieu! And turn to take my leave of the general reader.

There are two personages indispensibly necessary to a writer on a controversial subject, who accordingly are ever present to his imagination; and with one or other of whom, he is constantly engaged—These personages are his ANTAGONIST and his READER.

They are the creatures of fancy it is true, but they are nevertheless the representatives of things existing in nature: and in the promethean art of modelling and animating these august personages, consists the grandest secret of authorship. As the author gave them being for his own purposes, he stamps upon them his own image; and such as they are, will the work itself to be. To many, I grant, who handle the pen, the creation of an antagonist and a reader, is a matter of not the slightest consideration: their reader is any one who may chance to buy their books; and their antagonist, is some mortal like themselves, who has contradicted them. Hence they judge of the value of their works by the number of copies sold; and estimate their victories by the number and nature of the wounds, which they have inflicted on personal feeling. There are other writers, however, who aspire after the *beau ideal;* their readers, and antagonists are spiritual essences; the one perhaps far above, the other as far below the ordinary standard of humanity.

Now my antagonist is that FALSE PHILOSOPHY WHICH CORRUPTS CHRISTIANITY. I leave the spectre in all its undefined generality; I attack it wherever I meet it, and in the field which I have chosen, I meet it every where. I appropriate to it all the fierce and malevolent passions of my nature; it is a sophister, and I despise it; an enemy to the human race, and I hate it; a blasphemer of God and of his Christ, and I abhor it with all my soul. And having given this direction to the whole artillery of my wrath, I have no feeling left for the human family, but those of compassion and tenderness. My war is with error alone, pernicious and destructive

error; and I hope I have carried it on, without making invasion on the affection, honour, or deference due to my brethren of mankind. Were I not conscious to myself that throughout the whole work, I have had no ambition to gratify; no enmities to avenge; no emulations to cherish; nor any known or allowed feeling, which I would wish to conceal from any one; I should forfeit my conscientious conviction, that it is my duty to submit my sentiments to the consideration of the church of God.

My reader, on the other hand, is a very cherished character. As he is a creature of my own making I am concerned, that he may have been made well; but, whatever he is, this is what I intended him to be. I wished to compose him of all those lovely and respectable elements, which I would desire to find in the man whom I would call my friend; and, which I know I shall find, in some of those who shall read this work. I made him a true christian, in the full sense of the term, because such a one only can feel any interest in the subject of discussion; I have made him a man of sound common sense, because only such a man is a competent judge in any cause; I supposed him to be familiar with the Scriptures, because they are the only standard of judgment; and, I made him a logician, because I had many trains of logical argumentation to submit to him; I gave him candour, because I was determined to speak my sentiments candidly. In fine, I inspired him with heroic courage, because I was sure we should come into dangers; and I infused into him a large portion of cheerfulness, and good humour, because I foresaw that it would be highly advantageous to us, to be able to relieve the severity of investigation and argument, by some play

of the imagination and feelings. In a word, I made him superior to the prejudices, indifferent to the applauses, regardless of the censures, but indulgent to the weaknesses of mankind; a sincere lover of truth and of man.

> "To virtue only, and her friends, a friend;
> The world besides, may censure or commend:
> Know all the distant din mankind can keep,
> Rolls o'er his grotto, and but lulls his sleep."

But, now the hour is come, and we must part; and, as a man who gives free scope to his feelings, I feel pained at parting with thee—reader! Our arduous, but diversified, and delightful journey is ended; our association dissolves; and we part, perhaps no more to meet on earth. My heart goes with thee, in tender solicitude for thy future welfare, and with earnest prayer for thy best interests. Yet, I find a mixed and undefined emotion of pain at this separation; lest perchance I may, during our association, have done thee some harm. The purity of my intentions may be of great avail to myself, in that day, when the integrity of the heart will be remembered, and the mistakes of the understanding forgotten: but, what shall it avail thee, reader, if, while I was labouring to deliver thee from one set of dangerous speculations, I have plunged thee into others equally dangerous. Listen, then, to what I am going to say; for each must bear his own burden, and meet the consequences of his own personal responsibility.

I charge thee, then, to adopt no sentiment, as coming from me; nor think, that because I profess to have investigated these subjects so far, as to have obtained personal satisfaction for myself; and, so far as to justify me to myself, in laying my opinions

before the public; that, therefore, thou wilt be justifiable in adopting my conclusions, without incurring the trouble of the investigation. I protest, that thou shalt never charge the guilt of thy own negligence to me. I came not forward to dictate doctrines and dogmas; but, to put thee in the right path of inquiry, that thou mightest find out the truth of God, for thyself; and, if haply I could effect so much, to present thee with a few specimens of the true plan and spirit of investigation. I would not, if I could, be the lord of any man's faith; but gladly would I be the helper of all men's joy. The legitimate use which thou art to make of my labours is this. What I have demonstrated by the word of God, believe for that word's sake—in philosophical speculation, whatever I have proved by sound reason, admit for the reason's sake: whenever thou art in doubt whether I am right or wrong, suspend decision; be not rash in condemning what thou mayest find here, for there is very little of rash thought in this volume—but, when thou art sure that I am wrong, reject the error. For I have not, indeed I have not, the folly, or the vanity, to suppose, that in discussing so great a variety of difficult, litigated, and awfully important subjects, I can possibly have escaped falling into some mistakes and errors. And, since it has pleased God to show to me some of the errors of other men, far my superiors, in every view, except integrity of intention, in which respect I acknowledge no superiority in any man—so I pray, that he may quickly discover my errors to some others of his servants, that they may be exposed and refuted, and prevented from working mischief—and, that all this may be done while I am on earth, to profit by the detection.

There is a subject which lies near my heart.—This volume, I foresee, will fall into the hands of some men of great talents, and great learning, able interpreters of the word of God, workmen who need not to be ashamed of their work, rightly dividing the word of truth. Might I, in the affection of brotherhood, and in the spirit of a common cause, request them thoroughly to analyse some of those passages of Scripture, upon which I have rested the weight of my doctrines, and after such analysis, to deliver a public lecture on those passages to the church of God; that the spirit of the pulpit, succeeding to the spirit of the closet; they may feel, upon their souls, the full demonstrative evidence of the truth of God. I shall, painfully, feel myself neglected, if I do not obtain this boon from some of you; I am conscious, to myself, of having merited more than this at your hands. In fact, it is from such men, and from such men exclusively, that I expect, at the same time, support in the cause of truth, and the detection of my mistakes and errors. As for the metaphysicians, and system-mongers, I must decline them as incompetent judges.

I cannot resist an impression upon my mind, that there are some points of christian doctrine, at present litigated in the American churches, which must be settled in the present age; and, probably, by men, who are, at this moment, nearer the end, than the beginning of their earthly career; for our youth are, in great numbers, turning philosophers and metaphysicians; from which class of thinkers, the truth of the gospel has little to hope, and much to fear. It seems to me, that since the days of Jonathan Edwards, down to the present day, the doctrine of

atonement, and the gospel call, have been subjects of litigation over a great part of the American churches; and, that they have been entangled in artificial difficulties, arising partly from a supposed discrepancy between them and other parts of the christian system, and partly from certain abstract systems of theology, which aim at nothing less than legislating for the universe, and prescribing to its Creator. Wherever these speculations have reached the pulpit, (and I am afraid they have reached it to an extent, of which we are not aware, and are making progress,) the consequences have been—but they are all before the public eye. When you lay the map of the American churches before you, ask yourselves; where has christianity been corrupted, where has it disappeared?—Has it, or has it not been, among your ingenious, philosophical, metaphysical, speculators? Where, again, has it been preserved in its primitive simplicity and purity? Has it been among plain and simple men who read and expound the Scriptures, to the church of God, and who, in all their sermons, scatter the seed of the word broad-cast all over the field? Is it prudent, or dutiful, to continue to leave the defence of the gospel, entirely to the hands of ingenious metaphysicians? Every man of them, who has, heretofore, tried it, has, in the long run, failed; and some, who are, at this moment, engaged in the same warfare, and who make their victories resound in ever gazette, will be defeated: they have chosen untenable ground, and nothing can prevent their defeat.

Arise, commentators, furbish the spear, anoint the shield; the voice of your commander rings in your ears. But consider what you are, and what God has made you to be. These Sampsons carry all their

might in the hair of their heads; shorn, they are as other men. It is only in the divine word that they are invincible; they have for defence, the shield of faith, and the helmet of the hope of salvation; and for deeds of fearful vengeance against the foe, they have the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. What madness, I pray you is it, to strip off your own armour of heavenly temper, and put yourselves on a par with metaphysicians! Wrapped in the cloud of metaphysics, suppose you were to win a logical battle from them, what would the church of God be the better for it? She sees you not; she knows not where you are; nor what you are doing. You may indeed emerge from your darkness, and come back boasting a victory—your enemy is already hailed as victor in his camp.

It will easily be perceived that I am all along speaking of that defence of christianity, which is effected by the pen. I am perfectly aware that there are men of great respectability, who are of opinion that all errors should be suppressed, and crushed, by the strong hand of ecclesiastical authority. I cannot go along with them to the extent of their views, and feel a terror lest the day should come, when presbyteries and synods, and ecclesiastical assemblies, and conventions, shall think themselves entitled, and qualified, to decide on all the theological speculations of their members. Woe worth the day! By far too much has been done in this way already, in all parts of the world. Some sects give themselves very important airs, and boast of their superior purity and faithfulness, because they govern their churches with such jealous espionage, and rigorous discipline, that not a minister of their body dare risk a sentiment from the

pulpit contrary to what they affect to call "THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS," that is an imperfect, and, perhaps, in some points an erroneous, but at all events, a very defective synopsis of christian doctrine, put together by the hands of fallible men. Thus the free exercise of the human faculties in the investigation of religious truth is cramped, the human understanding is crippled; and while we proudly boast that the Bible, the Bible alone is the religion of protestants; while we justly decide that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, are the ONLY rule of faith and manners, we are commanded to interpret these Scriptures by a technical rule made and graduated by ignorant and fallible men; and as none of these rules, no, not one of them, exactly squares with the Scriptures, it is expected that we shall make the Scriptures exactly square with them. And thus it is, that instead of a sensible man proclaiming to the church of God, the truth which he himself has discovered in the Word of God, we sometimes meet with an artificial thing, cut out by a pattern; the exact size, figure, and dimensions of the creed of its church. You will know it by its crippled movements, its technicalities, its cant phrases, and the blustering battle which it makes against every thing, which cannot be reduced to the vocabulary of its sect. Is it then insinuated, that church courts have nothing to do with the faith and doctrine of the preachers of the gospel? By no means—*Stulti semper in contraria currunt.* But whatever may be the exact limits, which bound the interference of these courts, with the doctrine of the pulpit; it is certain, that they have, in almost all sects, rushed far beyond these bounds, like a resistless desolating deluge. Why should every

opinion, which a man may entertain, be subjected to the arbitration of his fellow-mortals? Why should twenty or thirty men, got together in a synod, imagine that they are entitled to condemn dogmatically, the opinions of a man, who, perhaps, has as much honesty, and more understanding, than any one of them; and who may have investigated the Scriptures more thoroughly than they all? Often has it happened, that the man whom ecclesiastical courts condemned as a heretic, was Jesus Christ's enlightened advocate for the truth of the gospel. Such men, are the Gallileos of their day, condemned to dungeons, for overreaching the intelligence of their age. I know, indeed, that it is written, "how can two walk together except they be agreed;" and I insist, as strenuously as any man, that there must be an agreement in doctrine, in order to church fellowship. But then the question comes up, how far must this agreement extend? If you insist that they shall agree in every thing, you will never get two to walk together as long as the world lasts; you must dissolve all churches, abolish all social worship, and leave each individual to pursue his own solitary dreary way. I do not know that the exact limits of agreement, in order to social fellowship in the profession and practice of religion, have ever been fixed, I do not know that they are capable of exact definition. Much must be left to the spirit of love, on this question the heart must be consulted more than the head. In order, however, to make some approximation towards the true line, the following observations are submitted. And as the object in view is ministerial communion, I shall confine myself to that.

No church has a right to require as a term of ministerial communion, an assent to any doctrine, which she cannot prove to be the direct and intentional meaning of numerous passages of Scripture. Two things are to be considered in the above proposition. The doctrine must be the direct and intentional meaning of the Holy Ghost, speaking in the Scriptures; for that alone is the word of faith; that alone controuls the conscience; and I will venture to assert, that every thing which ought to be a term of ministerial communion, will be found in the Scriptures expressed in as clear and definite terms as the omniscient Spirit could utter—I know some are fond of inferences; I have no objection, that those capable of drawing inferences, should enjoy the use of the talent, which God has given them. But all men are not logicians, nor are all ministers possessed of logical talents. What suppose I cannot see the justness of your inference? You have intellectual vision, but I am blind. If I profess to believe what I cannot see, because you assure me you see it clearly, is not my faith a mere human faith? I am afraid to begin with that human faith, because I do not know where it will end; but I am very sure that there is nothing of religion it. If thou hast an inference, have it to thyself: I cannot have it; God has not given me the talent; I must content myself with faith in the simple declarations of Scripture. I have supposed in the above, that the inference-drawer draws his inferences correctly; and that it is owing to a defect in the reasoning faculty, that others do not adopt them. This, however, is not always the case; sometimes it is not the want of logical talents, but the possession of them, that

puts it out of the power of a man to assent to the terms of communion, prescribed by ecclesiastical courts.

2. The second thing to be considered in the proposition with which we set out, is that the doctrine which is to be made a term of ministerial communion must be plainly taught in numerous texts of Scripture! I know indeed, it may be said, that one declaration of God, is as worthy of credence as a thousand. This is metaphysically correct. But I have two remarks on it, in relation to the subject on hand. First. If we can produce but one text in favour of a doctrine, a doubt may arise, whether we understand that one text. Critics are very delicate in deciding upon the meaning of the ῥημα ἁπαξ λεγομενον, a word only once used in all the Bible: they have not the means of comparing its application in a variety of phrases, which is necessary to a correct critical decision. But without pushing this subject any farther, I remark in the second place, that all the principles of faith worthy of being made terms of communion are repeatedly taught all over the Scriptures; they every where stand prominent, visible, brilliant, and glorious. The corruption and guilt of mankind, the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, the necessity of personal holiness, and a future state of rewards and punishments, are not only taught in the Bible, but they compose its very substance.

3. I assert, that not every doctrine which can be proved even by numerous texts of Scripture ought to be made a term of ministerial communion. The Bible is an immense field, no man, no, nor the angels of God, know all that it contains. One man knows a great deal, another less, another still less. Whether, suppo-

sing these three to be ministers of the gospel, should the terms of their ministerial communion be accommodated to the first or to the last? If to the first, you exclude the other two, if to the last, you include the whole. It is easy to entangle any subject in difficulties: let us speak candidly, as in the fear and presence of God. Do we not feel ourselves bound in conscience to bring down the terms of christian communion so low, as to include the weakest believer in Jesus Christ? Others may be strong, abounding in knowledge, gifts, graces, public services; but we must not presume to make their attainments the standard of christian communion. That standard must come down to the lowest of all the family of faith. This is a point decided by the Spirit of Jesus. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."*

Can any reason be assigned why this rule should not be applied to ministerial communion, as well as to christian? Why should not the standard of that communion be lowered down, so as to include all who are worthy to preach. There are weak and strong, small and great, in that class of men, as well as in others. Why should not the terms of communion be such, as to include the whole? Will it be said, that this would prevent the church from going on towards perfection?

How? Would the strong become weak, would the great become little, by co-operating with a little or a weaker brother? And then will the weak become strong, and the small become great, by giving, or professing to give, an assent to terms of communion beyond their comprehension? If it could be spoken with due respect to every one in his rank and sta-

* Rom. xiv. 1.

tion, I would say, that I question whether the majority be great, of those who on the day of their ordination comprehend the extent of the terms of communion, to which they are called to assent. And I much question, whether those, whose terms of communion are the most sweeping and tremendous, have not as great a proportion of weak brethren as others have.

Philosophical speculations are the rock, upon which ecclesiastical courts are most in danger of splitting. These are sometimes broached by weak men, but generally by men who are far from being weak; by men of speculative, and systematizing powers. The mode in which Adam's sin reaches us; the abstract nature of atonement; the metaphysical essence of saving faith; the nature and order of the spirit's operations in regeneration; the prime element of virtue; the distinction between the fore-knowledge and the decrees of God; liberty and necessity; free will and free grace; these, and such like subjects form the *nuclei* of many a system of theological speculations; while those who adopt a different hypothesis, in order to give a philosophical explanation of the doctrines of christianity, have absolutely the same faith, preach the same gospel, and offer up the same prayers and praises to Jesus Christ, and his Father.

Sometimes it happens that those who disagree in these philosophical speculations imagine that they differ in religious principles; and then they drag each other before the tribunals; where the nicest of all speculations, and the most insolvable of all problems, are submitted to the verbal litigation, and final decision of a court, composed of men of all ages,

sorts, and sizes. The young members, who are so prone to mistake acuteness of perception, for soundness of judgment; and metaphysical definitions for christian doctrine; are all fire and zeal, for the purity of the faith; and even the sages are forced into the controversy, and are not always sufficiently numerous to prevent a decision on questions, which ought not to have been agitated. To be fond of such speculations, I consider to be no proof of wisdom; to introduce them into the pulpit betrays an ignorance of the office of the gospel ministry; but to introduce them for decision into ecclesiastical courts is folly and madness in their wildest, madest forms.

I do conceive that church courts have a right, and that it is their duty, to see that salvation by the blood and spirit of Jesus Christ be preached in all their pulpits; and that for this purpose, they ought to enjoin, that the reading and expounding of the Holy Scriptures, should form a part of the ordinary services of the sanctuary. I do also conceive that they have a right to enjoin upon their members not to introduce into the pulpit, any of those fine spun speculations, which, whatever may be their worth, are obviously beyond the reach of the christian community, and tend rather to distraction than to edification. And I cannot imagine that any humble, dutiful, and discreet minister of the gospel would murmur at such an injunction. Often have I known this concession made to the private admonition of an individual; how much more should it be made to the conjunct council of the church of God.

But God forbid, that the free born soul of man, should be hampered or fettered in any of its efforts towards the discovery of truth. God forbid that any

man who has a speculation, which he deems subservient to truth and righteousness, should be cut off from all means of laying it before the public. Closing the pulpit against all such refined speculations, I would throw open the press. That is the proper field for such displays; thither let our speculator repair, where he will always find a chevalier with his foot in the stirrup and his spear in the rest, ready to run a tilt with him. In plain terms, I would permit a man to write, and publish any speculations he pleased on the philosophy of christianity, provided he did not directly deny its essential doctrines. So long as he preached the doctrine of faith from the pulpit, he should be allowed to speculate from the press, without ecclesiastical controul. I am persuaded that no serious evil would ensue from this liberal toleration. A man would abstain from preaching metaphysics, at the risk of offending his brethren, when he knew that he might write them without any manner of offence. And pray! what harm could ensue? If the man writes abstractions in abstract technical phraseology, as he must, if he writes them at all; he has this felicity that few will read, and fewer still understand him. Besides all such questions (so it happens) are so nicely balanced, that which ever side a champion takes, he is likely to meet on the opposite a champion, who will give him the honour of a drawn battle; and then, like Homer's heroes, they may exchange armour, and make friends. In the mean time, the church of God hearing them both preach the gospel, and not well comprehending the subject of their dispute, will very naturally, and not unjustly conclude, that whatever it may be, it is nobody's business but their own.

I believe that there is something very like scriptural example, for the course which has been recommended. It appears from the New-Testament, that there were preachers, who taught what the apostles disapproved, whom yet they did not crush by the weight of ecclesiastical authority, casting them out of the church; but resorted to the pen, to refute and neutralise their speculations. And since it has pleased God, to bestow upon mankind the invaluable art of printing, by which, the productions of the pen may be multiplied, to any extent of public demand, it would seem to be the most proper course, to resort to that vehicle of communication, to promulgate, and to refute doctrines, which are of too abstract and refined a nature for the discussion of the pulpit, or the decission of the tribunal. With his pen in his hand, a learned and ingenious man, writing for learned and ingenuous men, may take the full scope of his subject, and indulge the highest efforts of his genius. It was by acting on this view of things, that the original reformers displayed such superhuman powers. What majesty of thought, what resources of learning, what energy of eloquence, do their controversial writings display! All the while they fed the church with the sincere milk of the word. But in modern times, when we carry our controversies into the pulpit, and simplify them down to the comprehension of every man, woman, and child, who hears us, how poor and jejune are our discussions? And after all, mean and meagre as our pulpit litigations are, we feel that our arguments are not thoroughly perceived and estimated; and as we are certain that we cannot make much impression upon the understandings of

our audience, we are fain to make an impression on some more tangible part of their constitution. Lofty looks, dogmatic assertions, sly inuendoes, and thundering denunciations, are employed to impress them with the importance of that which we would inculcate, or inspire them with a detestation of what we would refute. Alas! what have the common audience to do with some of the refined speculations, which in some places are preached for christian doctrine. I have read sermons more abstract than any thing in Berkley, Locke, or Reid; of which I could truly say, *ne quidem ipe intelligo.* How could even Jacob force a march, when the women and children, and the flocks and the herds with their young, must be brought along; but when he had the field to himself, he could wrestle all the night long with the angel of the covenant, and not let him go till he had wrung from him a blessing.

The Bible, that blessed book, that work which the omniscient Spirit of God, gave to rational man; that which in words we call the only rule of faith and practice; that to which we declare that nothing shall be added, and from which we decide, that nothing must be taken; that book which was given not merely to be the minister's text-book, but the church's property, her sacred charter, and her code of law; the Bible must be more estimated, more studied, more used, than it has yet been. What can a church of God mean, when she calls a man to be her minister? Does she call a man of talents and learning, and a good speaker, to gratify her once a week with a sensible speech well spoken? She means no such thing—the society which means no more than this, is no church. A true church of God, calls a minister to read and expound the law of her Lord; that is his work—his great

work. I know indeed, that there are societies, called churches, who invite an eloquent man to pronounce a weekly oration, on the general subject of morals; and provided the speech display masculine thought and eloquence, some such societies care very little whether it be the doctrine of the Bible or not. I am not disposed to be hypercritical: such societies may, perhaps, have their use. But a church of God is, I conceive, a society of a different description: she is organised for the express purpose of studying and obeying the law of her Lord, the Sacred Scriptures. Of consequence, one would think, these Scriptures must be read and expounded in all her meetings: to ascertain their meaning, and bring their doctrine and laws, to bear upon the actual state of society, appears to be the principal business of a pulpiter. Laying aside for the present other official functions, the gospel minister, in the character of preacher, is an expositor of the Scriptures and nothing more. His word acknowlegedly goes for nothing, unless he can prove that he is speaking the inspired dictates of the Holy Scriptures. He tells you himself, that you must not believe what he says, unless he can show that it is the word of God. The officer I speak of, comes out in a most lordly character: he comes not merely to teach me, but to command me to believe what he teaches; he comes not merely to help me to speculate upon moral subjects, but to prescribe me my duty; he assumes a superhuman port and majesty; he tells me he has a commission from Almighty God to me; he asserts to my face, that the mediatorial Son of God has sent him to instruct and to command me; he thunders, he threatens me with the wrath of my Creator and Redeemer, if I should disobey what he utters as law and gospel.

Now, for one, I choose to challenge, and to test these high pretensions. I choose to look this man in the face, and to say, how shall I know that my God has sent you to instruct and govern me? how shall I know, that Jesus Christ has sent you to trouble my brain, distract my heart, and harrow my conscience? Can you work miracles? has God armed you with his omnipotence, as a pledge, that your tongue shall be guided by his omniscience? I must see your commission. I must see why a thing, like myself, should presume to instruct, controul, and terrify me!

He produces his Bible—text after text—passage after passage, does he produce—whole books, written by inspired men, does he produce—and then asks me, do you want any more evidence? And, when my silence, and blushes, show that I feel my subordination and responsibility, then he comes out—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." He takes the full command of me, in every case where he can produce scriptural authority; but no farther. I would die, I would be annihilated, before I would permit a thing, like myself, to dictate religion to me. But, when the man comes forward, and opens God's own word, and shows, to my own rational satisfaction, that he is preaching the very doctrine of Moses, and all the prophets—of Paul, and all the apostles—and of the Son of God himself, then I tremble and submit. Now, let these men take their own proper rank in society; a rank not assigned by the pride of themselves, or of their age; but, appointed by God, for the common good of us all.

Now, if it be asked, by what means shall the gospel minister be enabled to maintain his high character most

effectually? How shall he most effectually support his official rank? If he transforms himself into a human dictator; if he insists that his words shall be received as oracles, his pretensions will be questioned and resisted; and, instead of being permitted to command, he will scarcely be allowed to instruct. It is, as I conceive, when he is acting as a mere expositor of Scripture, that the gospel minister appears in his highest glory. It is then that the greatest deference is paid to him. It is then that he speaks with peculiar authority. His people no longer seem to think, that they are listening to man's doctrine; they dare not give scope to their ingenuity, to criticise their preacher, for they see, in their Bibles, all that he is saying; they dare not be angry with him, though he speaks daggers to them, for he is explaining God's own law; he cannot help saying what God has put in his own holy word. The people are thus relieved from a great deal of foolish conjectures, how their preachers came to bear so severely on them. They need not to ask themselves, who could have reported their character and conduct, so exactly, to their minister, that he seems to be drawing their picture. They need not be angry, unless they choose to be angry at God, for having given them his Bible. I am well convinced, that the church must be reformed, at last, by the reading and expounding of the Holy Scriptures; and, that there is no other effectual means of reformation.

Perhaps it may be thought, that I am led away by some prejudice of education or habit, to give an undue preference to one method of preaching the gospel over all others. We are all, however, more interested in the soundness of an opinion, than in the circumstances which may have led any man to adopt it.

Every mode of instruction does good: it does not follow that one mode of preaching must be bad, because another mode is better. Sermons on detached texts have, doubtless, done great good, and ought not to be abolished. But, as the means of communicating correct views of religious truth, can they, at all, be compared to regular expositions of whole books of Scripture? Let us examine this subject seriously.

Where are ministers themselves to get their theological knowledge? The writings of systematic divines are, surely, not the purest sources of theological information; inspired truth certainly is not improved by uninspired men. Might it not be the worth the church's while, to consider whether she ought not to exact a weekly exposition of a passage of Scripture from her ministers, not merely for the purpose of her instruction, but for the purpose of instructing themselves. An intelligent commentator, cannot be a bad divine. Preparation for the weekly exposition of Scripture, compels a minister to be a diligent student. It keeps him habitually engaged over the whole field of literature, languages, criticism, history, chronology, laws, antiquities, every thing. A good expositor of Scripture must become a learned divine, according to the measure of his faculties. Who enjoys the benefit? Himself first, and next the church. I am persuaded, that there are expositors, who, if their churches were to require them to quit the practice, and confine themselves to sermons, would indignantly close their pulpit doors—exclaiming, NO! If I am not permitted to preach christianity by explaining the Bible, I will not spend my time writing eloquent orations for those who do not love the truth.

Young preachers are apt to shrink back from the difficulties which attend a commentator. It would be doing nothing to diminish their fears, by cherishing false hopes. The difficulties lie in the nature of things; and he who tries the work, may expect to meet them. The only true encouragement is this; that if the labour be difficult, the pay is glorious. The clear and assured views of evangelical truth, which the practice of scriptural exposition produces; the intellectual and spiritual riches, which is the result; the promptitude and facility with which divine subjects will, by and by, be grasped, discussed, and handled; these are a few, and only a few, of the precious rewards, which God bestows on all the diligent students of his own word. The minister who has conquered the difficulties of a commentator, I mean he who can, with reasonable industry, expound a chapter, or half a chapter, of the Bible, on the Sabbath, has, in reality, conquered all the most formidable difficulties of his office. Sermons cost such a man almost nothing. Saturday is divested of all its terrors. He never trembles about a few leaves of manuscript. He can check for thousands, and is not afraid of failing for small change. If his heart be only right with God, he can hardly ever be unprepared for preaching the gospel. Thus, before he has reached the meridian of life, he finds himself a man; and carries his sermons in his heart, not in his pocket.

In all that has been said respecting the importance of preaching the gospel, in the way of formal exposition of the Scriptures, I do not think that there is any thing, in the slightest degree, hyperbolical or overstrained. I do indeed, believe, that this is the very means ordained by God, to effect that har-

mony in the faith and profession of christianity, for which we are praying, and which we believe to be predicted and promised in the Bible. Now, by what possible means can this be effected? Can any man conceive or conjecture any other means, than the reading and expounding of our common Bible? There cannot be any other means; so sure as water is the proper element to quench fire, and fire the element to burn wood, so surely must the reading and expounding of the Scriptures, be the proper means of promoting the purity of the church's faith. It will produce unity in the faith also, so far as that is desirable, or possible, among men; I say possible, for so long as one man is wiser than another, there will be differences of opinion among them; and we need not desire or look for impossibilities. All the other means men have been talking of, all the other roads which they have been laying out, to conduct us to this desirable object, seem to me, to be very much about. However, as some of my readers might not wish to be interrupted in paths, which they have been accustomed to travel with pleasure and delight; I shall, very willingly, accommodate matters with them, in the following way: you shall be indulged in all the means you can invent, to diffuse pure and undefiled religion among men: but, in the name of God, let us have his own word expounded to us every Lord's day, from the pulpit. In all parts of the world, wherever I have been, those preachers, who were commentators, were the same sort of men. Even when such men miss the meaning of a text, still they lay before you the text itself; and, if you should not understand the comment, the inspired document is still your own.

But will any one say, that the preachers of sermons are celebrated over all the world, for harmony of doctrine? I am very far from wishing to hurt the feelings of any preacher, I am far from presuming to dictate; but it is the common right of humanity, to examine and compare the relative merits of different modes of operation. Mere sermonizers are notorious for the difference of their doctrine. Not a note heard at Babel, but may be heard with them. And can it be otherwise? When genius and eloquence are thrown loose, on the general field of religion and morals, sermons will differ in their materials, like the other literary productions of the age. It will be found, I believe, that a writer and preacher of sermons cannot avoid falling less or more under the influence of the reigning sentiments of his age; and thus instead of guiding public opinion, he is guided by it himself. I do not see the possibility of avoiding this evil.

The age in which we live too, is fastidious in its taste. It exacts—it can hardly tell what it exacts; novelty, figure, pathos, rhetoric. We refuse to put up with sound good sense; the man who rests the weight of his discourse, upon the importance of the truths which he utters, will be suspected of some defect in genius or erudition. Never was an age less concerned about what is spoken; but we insist that it shall be spoken well. We demand in composition, the pomp of Johnson, the magnificence of Burke, or the pathos of Curran; and in utterance we demand, the attitudes, tones, and thunders of the stage. Who now praises a minister of the gospel, except for his eloquence? Is he a good speaker? This is the question; almost the only question asked, when

a congregation is seeking a pastor. Whilst this state of the public mind is hailed by some as a sure proof of increasing civility and refinement; there are others, who behold it with pain and lamentation, as an evidence of a frivolity, which prefers elegant amusement, to the awful realities of the gospel. Both these views are correct. But our chief business is to diminish the evil, without impairing what is good.

It must be apparent to all, that the preachers of such an age, are under dangerous temptations to waste their time in composing and polishing fine classical productions, under the name of sermons; and thus making their appeal to the taste, instead of the conscience of their people. That there is a fastidiousness in the present demand for eloquence on the part of the public; and too great eagerness on the part of preachers to satisfy that demand, is, I believe, the universal sentiment among the grave and judicious. The public insist that they shall sit as critics, on the talents and taste of their ministers. Ministers prepare themselves for the ordeal, which they cannot avoid; they spend their time, they absolutely wear down and waste their animal and intellectual vigour in writing fine classical sermons; till, when they have done writing them, they have scarcely animation left to be able to preach them, or even to read them decently. Whilst the public make such large demands for elegance, they are no less clamorous for variety. In this too they must be gratified. Hence where the sermon alone is the instrument of public instruction, it becomes the vehicle of all sorts of subjects: now it is a philological discussion on the meaning of a scriptural phrase; again it becomes a moral argument on some principle of legislation; it discusses all sub-

jects, and partakes of the attributes of all kinds of composition. Is it possible for any man to avoid falling into a narrow circle of theology, who does nothing in the pulpit, but preach finely composed classical sermons. Where is corrupt doctrine taught? and by whom is it taught?

There can be no method conceived so effectual to banish erroneous doctrine, and introduce true doctrine; to reform, enliven, and invigorate the church; as the old reforming method of preaching the gospel, by publicly reading and interpreting the Scriptures themselves. Reading and expounding the Scriptures, was a method of preaching the gospel, to which Christ and his apostles had recourse, on all proper occasions. It was this method of preaching which produced the reformation; and as soon as it is universally adopted, it will produce another reformation, still more glorious than the last. It is not absolutely true, that the Bible alone is the religion of protestants; it is very far from being true; the Bible has not yet obtained its proper rank in any church in Christendom.

The world will not believe me, it will look down on my ignorance, it will rebuke my impudence, it will run me down with authority; it will, no doubt, treat me as not loyal to the truth, perhaps, as an enemy to the truth. Be it even so, if such be the good will and good sense of mankind. But if men will not listen, then let the stones in the street give ear. It was mainly, and principally, by shutting the Bible out of the church that the reformation was arrested. There were other causes, but this was the chief. There is in all human affairs a mixture of fault and misfortune, which furnishes the censorious with objects of rebuke, and the compassionate with objects of pity.

The reformers brought with them too much of the subtleties of the old school divinity; they sat down to write huge systems of theology, in order to give christianity a more philosophical arrangement than its author saw proper to bestow on it; they wrote creeds, confessions, constitutions, and liturgies for their churches. These human bibles, became the grand instrument of propagating christianity. It was in them, that men were called to express their faith; they became the instruments of youthful instruction; they became the text book in all theological seminaries; and they impressed their own technical forms upon the public mind so thoroughly; that it is a very rare thing, to find a single example of a pure Bible-christian. Many I know will profess to be astonished at what they will call the perversion of my mind. But they cannot wonder at me, more than I wonder at them. They will wonder at me, that I cannot see that confessions are absolutely necessary to the church; I shall wonder at them for believing, that Jesus Christ should leave his church for so many centuries, without that which was so necessary to her existence. They will wonder at me for not believing that confessions of faith are bonds of union; I shall wonder at them, for not believing that these instruments are wedges of division; that their necessary effect is to organise society into factions of hostility. They will wonder, how I should believe, that it would be possible to detect false doctrine by the Bible alone; I shall wonder at them, for ever thinking of employing any other instrument of detection. Perhaps, without gaining our cause on either side, we may lose our temper, and, with it, our candour. If any man shall accuse me of enmity to the truth, I will not retort

the charge upon him; but leave the decision of all such matters, to him who will judge all his creatures in equity. I bore that charge in my youth, for having no more than refused my assent to some doctrines of men, which I really could not believe, and saw no reason why they should press them upon me. I have, thank God, fairly lived down the accusation. I have lived to defend the essential truths of the gospel to a greater extent than any one, or so far as I know, than all the accusers of my soundness in the faith, have as yet done. But the subject of organizing the church, by the means of the Bible alone, is not yet ripe for discussion; at least the world is not yet ready to come to a decision. The church must, perhaps, wait, till all her present unscriptural organization shall have perished, in the present conflict with the spirit of the age.

I have been led out to say something more on these subjects, than I originally intended; because the thickening events of each succeeding day, convince me, that the church cannot long continue in her present condition; but that she will shortly be called to conflict for the whole of her faith, and be compelled to change much of her present arrangement and order. Her Lord, her Bible, and the throne of grace, must shortly become her sole reliance. In closing this work on the MEDIATORIAL REIGN OF THE SON OF GOD, it seemed to me that some practical views of the present state of his kingdom were necessary to fill up the outline of my plain.

I have in the amplest manner demonstrated, that this mediatorial Sovereign is a most gracious Sovereign; equally able and willing to save the whole human family; and that every one of them, who is equally

willing to accept his salvation, shall enjoy it. I have proved my doctrine purely by the Scriptures; rejecting all the speculations of men, and decisions of councils, as totally unworthy of any authority. And I thought it my duty to tell the church's rising ministry, that if they hope to render successful service, in the awfully arduous task which is shortly to be assigned them, they must make a much more liberal use of the Bible, than their fathers of this generation have set them any example. The first step for them, is to take the Bible itself into their studies, and next into their pulpits. By no other method can they ever preach the gospel, with the same purity, power, and efficacy; by no other method can they hope to give testimony to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. From the pulpit, the Bible will find its way into your more private administrations, as the instrument of educating the young; and raising a generation of Bible christians, who may be able to meet the sore trial which awaits the faith of the saints. Operating thus in the church, and in the closet; on the old, and on the young; on the people and on the priest, it will soon find its due station in the public courts. And when those days come, that the Bible receives its due place and honour from all; church courts will not be necessitated to hunt in the wisdom of former ages, for formularies, plans, and models, devised in other states of society, in other countries, under other laws, institutions, and habits; but will be able to operate upon their own society, in their own age; by means of the Bible, which God's wisdom devised for the whole of human society, in all nations and in all ages, till the end of the world.

It is a singular fact, that is, a fact which admits of no explanation, by the ordinary current of human events, that all our religious impressions, feelings, and experience, are connected with the Bible, in a most singular manner. God, in his mercy, may sometimes step over the ordinary connections of cause and effect, of means and end, in regard to the spiritual improvement of his rational offspring. He is a sovereign, and an omnipotent one. With him, *tantum voluisse sat est*, he wills and it is done. Far different is the case with man; he must lay all his plans according to the laws of the world he lives in, both physical and moral. We read, that a prophet's axe once swam on the surface of a river, but we must not throw our axes into rivers, in hopes that they will swim. Let us meditate on the following questions: What can be the cause, that in hearing the gospel, it is the Scripture quoted, which produces the whole scriptural effect? What can be the cause, that when a sinner comes into deep troubles of conscience, it is no matter what his minister says to him, unless he produces texts of Scripture? Who ever escapes out of any trouble of conscience, unless by the means of some text of Scripture? What is the reason, that old saints betake themselves to nothing but reading the Scriptures? What can be the reason, that at deathbeds, a minister of the gospel depends on nothing else than texts of Scripture? Go through the whole spiritual concerns of the whole human race, and put appropriate questions to yourselves, on each particular occurrence, and then tell me what can be the reason, that we can produce no spiritual effect, no effect which we judge connected with salvation, by any other instrument but the Bible.

I think we are all sure of this fact. What then can be the reason of it? Or rather, what should be our deduction from it? And what the practical result of that deduction? This is my decision.—

The Bible is the mediatorial instrument, which the mediatorial Son of God uses, in subduing the sons of men into submission to his own divine authority. By his Spirit he acts; and this Bible is the very wisdom of his Spirit put into words; and as man is to be addressed, and influenced, through the medium of words, this book of course is the very sceptre of his power. This book does all the good that is done. I do not limit the divine and sovereign majesty, who may do what he pleases, and who never travels out of the usual track, except to confer some unexpected blessing upon us; but speaking as a man among men, I say the Bible is the book which does all the good that is done among us.

Will mankind then be offended with me, if I wish to see that blessed book put into its fullest operation? If I wish to see it in the hands of all their babes, of all their students of theology, of all their preachers of the gospel; and if I wish to take out of all their hands, other books which would keep this book out of their hands?

The age is coming when this must be! It is not yet clear day light; but there is a dawning towards morning.

> "Hyperion's march we spy
> And glittering shafts of war."

Our grandsons will look back upon us, and wonder how we spent our time, they will, perhaps, question whether we had the talents of men, whether we had the real knowledge and love of the gospel, and will honour our age with the epithet of the dark age. It is

thus we look to ages past, and call them dark ages; when ministers of the gospel, were projecting and manufacturing a hundred thousand laws, and forms, and rights and ceremonies (honestly did they act, I believe in my heart) for the promotion of christian piety among men: all the while these ministers themselves, never thought of the Bible; or if they thought of it, they said it is too difficult for the common people to understand; or it is not sufficient to direct and regulate the present age; or whatever they said, they must have thought, that the cause of religious truth and piety, requires some human aid and regulation, not provided for in the Bible, and so they went to work to supply the desideratum. They made bad work of it undoubtedly; we all can see that. And we cry, why did not these ministers study the Bible themselves; and why did they not diffuse it among the people? O reader, the reason is obvious, they actually thought, that if the Bible were let loose in the world, it would turn the world upside down, and banish away all true piety. They have actually told us all this; and that we might the more readily believe them, they have taken the trouble of having the matter decided in presbyteries, synods, and councils; and clothed and incased in all the infallible dignity, which human impotence can confer on human folly.

After all the pious pains of the ministry, to keep the Bible from doing mischief in the church of God, it at last got out into the public, and began its tremendous operations. People were soon as wise as their priests: they were surrounded with the glorious light of heaven; and they looked back on the past age, and called it, not slanderously, a dark age. We think they spoke right, and we repeat their speeches; for it is an easy thing

to be a reformer a hundred years back—Nothing so easy as to rectify the mistakes of the dead!

The generous age which is coming on will (I think they will) pity the old reformers, who inheriting the old curse of Constantine, the patronage of civil power, were by a sort of invincible necessity obliged to secularise the Reformed church, in order to preserve its existence. They had to make CONFESSIONS OF FAITH to the civil powers, in order to be permitted to live and use the Bible; and they had to draw the civil sword in self-defence, because it was drawn against them. They certainly deserve pity, even when they are wrong.

But what will the generous age alluded to say of us? We have no entangling connections with the civil powers. They call for no CONFESSIONS OF FAITH from us. They refuse to know any thing of us as religionists. The state neither protects nor persecutes our christianity. She recognises us as men, allows us the rights of men, and exacts of us only the earthly duties of men. As for religion, we may be as religious as ever we please; may believe what we please, and profess what we please, and do what we please, provided we do not violate the law. As for all that immense power which man has over man, by religious instruction, counsel, and co-operation, the state refuses to touch it. She refuses to expend one single charge of powder and ball against opinions. Of consequence, the christian church in America may be just as christian as she pleases. It is amusing to hear christian men grumbling, that the American government does not patronise christianity; while it is the most prominent feature of that government, that she, and she alone, is the patroness of christianity; and is doing for

that divine religion all that a civil government can do, or ought to attempt, she leaves conscience to the God of conscience; she refuses to coerce or compel the free born mind; let men instruct one another, and advise one another, and, if necessary, they may rebuke one another—but they must not break the peace. Rich as this government is in woods, and groves, and coppices, she refuses to spare a single faggot for an *auto de fe*. Christianity is here left to herself, and therefore may purify herself from all her corruptions, without resistance or opposition from the civil power; and for this reason I cannot but cherish the opinion, that America is the spot chosen by our Redeemer, upon which pure apostolic christianity is to make her last glorious rally; and then march on to regain all that she has lost, and to acquire all that is promised and secured to her by her Lord. It was on this ground that civil liberty, when beaten out of Europe, first recovered her feet; and no sooner had she secured a firm standing, than she marched back to regain her lost possessions; she has been engaged in that war ever since, and long will the contest be; but right will prevail at last.

Let no one imagine that this is an author's compliment; invented, pointed, and polished, for the purposes of his bookseller: let no one imagine that I mean to say, that American soil is peculiarly suited to generate and cherish ideas of civil and religious liberty: or that Americans themselves, are the wisest men in the world; I protest I do not believe either of these propositions; and I think that national vanity, as well as personal vanity, should place itself under the guidance of some fixed moral principle; if for no other reason, at least for this, to save itself from becoming first

ridiculous and next contemptible. The opinion I have expressed, is founded entirely on the peculiar felicity of the circumstances, in which God has placed the American church. She may, if she pleases, reform herself without tearing society into pieces, without overturning the civil government, without setting brothers to the horrible work of shedding brothers' blood. This is the felicity of the American church. Could men as wise, as learned, as honest, as pious as any of us; or (if the idea could be at all admitted, even into a hypothetical proposition) could men tenfold our superiors in all that gives dignity to human nature; could such men, even if they did exist, effect an apostolic revolution in any country in Europe, on any other terms than civil war and bloodshed? What would be the effect of an attempt to reform the stiff and stubborn Presbytérianism of Scotland, or the pompous lordly Prelacy of England? The attempt would end, not at the point, but at the hilt, of the bayonet! In such a state of things, men of piety and good sense, will suffer things to go on as they are, making a little abatement of legal rigour, in favour of scrupulous consciences. They will not, they ought not, to precipitate, for one day, the havock and calamity, which they know must eventually overtake their churches. The true christian is a man of peace, and bloodshed is alien to his heart.

We, on the contrary, labour under no such restraints. We may reform our churches without blood. And we shall be compelled to do it. Human things will not permit religious society to be managed much longer on present maxims, and in the modes and regulations so much praised by those, who perhaps have not thought much about them; but adopted them as

infallibly right, without a moment's thought about their rectitude.

What do we mean, I pray you, when we talk of preserving the truth and purity of christianity, by means of the Auxburg confession, or the thirty-nine articles, or the Westminster confession of faith. I prize these public instruments highly, I prize the men who made them, I love their very shades. But these very instruments are the documents of my mother's degradation. They tell me that she once was in a situation, that she had to make her confession to the civil power, in order to be permitted to live. I pity her. But now that God, in this happy land, has redeemed her from her bondage, I insist that she is a free woman, and all her sons free born men. I insist that she has no sovereign but the Son of God, and no law but his Bible. Give her back her Bible. And with it, and her prayers, old and wrinkled and stunted as she is, she will soon grow young again; beautiful, amiable, loving, and lovely; full of truth, fidelity and tenderness. How dare a minister of the gospel say, that the Bible, which alone the Son of God and his inspired apostles gave to the church, is not a sufficient text of orthodoxy, a sufficient bond of unity, a sufficient instrument to effect all that the church can effect on earth!

I know that there will be difficulties, in getting matters into the true and proper channels. We are not accountable for those difficulties, because we did not create them. We must meet them with faith and fortitude. We must act, and we must suffer; our lot is cast, our fate is determined, we must meet the consequences. I recommend no rash and visionary idea, of revolutionizing the church of God in a day; I am a little too old for such folly, but it is high time to begin

the discussion of these subjects. And according to the doctrine which I have advanced before, the press is the proper medium for the discussion of such subjects. Let us write at one another, and talk at one another, for twenty or thirty years; and whenever we find a minister of the gospel, wearing his flock towards scriptural ground, let us not, at the peril of our souls, touch him. But the subject I have touched is immense; I must stop; but not without a little tribute of the heart.

To the friend of my youth, who cheered me on a former production; and urged me on to the present, by those awful words, I CHARGE YOU GO ON WITH YOUR WORK; I have now to say, here is that work, as perfect as under my circumstances I could make it. Your charge was not lost; it cheered me, in many a cheerless and dejected hour. And now it is my turn to charge. When you shall have read this book, and carefully weighed its doctrines, if you should think that they are the dictates of scriptural truth, then I charge you, that they shall have the full support of those highly cultivated talents which God has given you, and which he has placed under the guidance of one of the tenderest and noblest of human hearts. If you should think, that in any material point of doctrine I have erred, (for pic nic criticisms are out of the case between us) then, and in that case, it is your duty to let me know the instances, that I may have the honour of retracting my errors before I die. Wherever we are, in whatever hemisphere, on the land or on the wave, our object is the same, the glory of the Son of God in the salvation of our race; and our hearts are knit by ties which death himself shall never be able to sever.

Brethren pray for us, said an apostle. It is around the gracious throne of their heavenly Father, that the saints, in all parts of the globe, assemble to unite their prayers for one another, and for the world which lieth in wickness. Thus are they mutually blessing, and blessed; and the world itself which hateth them, is blessed by them. Let us pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

THE END.

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